

# Dichromatic

# Dichromatic

7 – Differentiation And Existence

22 – On Progress And Regress

50 – The Dilemmas Of Gain And Loss

65 – Vanya

## Prologue – The Curse of Erysichthon

There lived a foolish and arrogant king. His name was Erysichthon. He was as foolish as his daughter was wise. Time and again she'd saved him from his own folly. But one morning, before she understood what was in his mind, he ordered his servants to fetch his subjects from his city. He took them all, his daughter too, down to a grove of trees sacred to the goddess Demeter. Demeter is an ancient Greek goddess associated with agriculture, grain, and fertility. She is one of the twelve major Olympian gods and goddesses who lived on Mount Olympus. Demeter is best known as the goddess of the harvest, responsible for the fertility of the soil and the growth of crops. She is also the mother of Persephone, the goddess of spring, and the wife of Zeus, the king of the gods.

In the center of the grove, there was an ancient oak. 'Chop it down!' commanded Erysichthon. His servants looked at one another anxiously. 'Father, this is madness!' shouted the princess. 'If you cut down this tree, the goddess will punish you for it.'

'Just my point. There are no gods, no goddesses. There's only us. And you are all fools who shake at shadows. I will prove that every prayer is wasted air.'

Yelled king Erysichthon as he grabbed an axe and swung it behind him. Everyone who dared to look then saw the tree trembling from its roots to the tips of its leaves. When the blade struck the bark, dark blood came from the wound he'd made and there was a cry: 'I am the spirit', echoed an ominous voice 'who lives in this tree. Cut it down and you slaughter me. If I die by your hand, I swear revenge will fall on you as heavy as a falling oak.'

The king laughed. He kept on cutting until, with a dreadful moan, the tree crashed to the ground. He held a feast that night. He stuffed his mouth, he stuffed his mouth, he stuffed his mouth until his belly bulged. That night nymphs in the grove wept around the tree stump. Then one of them flew up to Mount Olympus, the home of the immortals. She flew to the palace of Demeter and asked for revenge, and Demeter granted her request.

"For every power, there must be its opposite. If there is a goddess of plenty somewhere there must be a goddess of lack. Of course, the two can never meet."

Demeter said, 'Nymph, take my dragon-drawn chariot. Ride three days and nights through the sky to the north till you see below you a leafless, lifeless place. There

you will see her, the spirit of hunger. Tell her to possess this Erysichthon. Tell her King Erysichthon belongs to her now.'

The nymph rode the chariot through the sky till she saw below her a wasteland where even the air moaned. She saw Hunger at once. Hunger was on her hands and knees, scraping at the cracked, arid earth, uncovering a tree root that she ground between her teeth. Hunger's face was a blue-grey skull. Her jaws clack together as if she was a cat staring at a bird out of reach. Her joints seem swollen beside her spindly limbs. Her skin was so thin that veins and guts can be seen quivering within. The nymph knew danger when she saw it. She shouted her instructions from a safe distance away. She shook the reins of the chariot and rose up into the sky. But even so, she felt a cramp in her gut.

That night Hunger flew through the sky. She travelled to the palace of King Erysichthon. She crept through an open window. He was fast asleep in his bed on his back, snoring, his mouth open. She pressed her thin lips to his and blew a torrent of starvation into his open mouth. Then she was gone, like smoke sucked up a chimney, away from the land of plenty back to the realm of lack. The king as he slept dreamt that he sat at a table eating a meal that tasted of nothing.

The next morning he was woken by a nagging pain in his belly. He sat up and found his jaws had a life of their own. They clacked together as if he was a cat staring at a bird out of reach. He called for food. He ate and ate but this hunger was like fire: the more he fed it the stronger it became. He called for more food in bigger bowls heaped higher. But it was no use: it was as if he was throwing crumbs into a chasm. Food enough to feed his family, food enough to feed his palace, food enough to feed his city, food enough to feed his nation he crammed into his open mouth. He only stopped chewing to call for "More food!"

He ate his way through all his wealth. He sold all of his lands, his herds, and his properties until at last, all he had left were the clothes he wore and his daughter and he sold her into slavery for the price of one meal. She did not deserve such a fate. As she was led away she lifted her head to the heavens: 'Great Demeter, don't punish me for what my father did. Help me now!'

Demeter answered her request. When the slave-owner reached the harbour he turned to speak to his new slave. She'd gone. And where she had been an old fisherman was mending his nets. 'Hey, you!' Shouted the slave owner, 'where did

that woman go? She wears her hair long and loose. She was here moments ago. Where is she now?' The princess looked at her hands. She didn't recognise them. She'd never seen them before: gnarled, brown, trembling. She put her hand to her chin: a beard. The goddess had answered her prayer; the goddess had transformed her. She opened her mouth and out came a voice she didn't know: 'Oh, she fled into the city. If you go at once, I'm sure you'll catch her.' Said the princess with her newfound voice.

The slave owner turned. He ran as fast as he could. The princess took one step and she was restored to her true shape. She had an idea. She searched the city till she found her father squatting by the side of the road, cramming leaves and twigs into his mouth. 'Father,' she said, 'I've found a way to save you from yourself.'

That afternoon King Erysichthon led into the market a mare, a horse with a flowing mane. A soldier bought it. He paid a high price. As he led it away, the reins in his hands behind him sagged and went slack. He turned and looked. The horse had vanished into thin air. But beside the road a young woman, her hair long and loose, was picking flowers.

The next day King Erysichthon sold a bright bird to an old woman in another market in the city. The woman took it home. She left it in her bedroom. After a while, she opened the bedroom door to look at it. The bird had gone, vanished into thin air. She ran outside and all she saw was a young woman, her hair long and loose, picking figs.

The next day King Erysichthon sold a sheep to a shepherd. As the shepherd was urging it out of the city he stumbled, and in the moment it took him to close his eyes and open them again the sheep vanished. He turned, looked about him and there, beside the road, a young woman, her hair long and loose, was searching for mushrooms.

Every day she played this trick. Every day she won money to feed her father's hunger. But it was no use. At last the moment she dreaded arrived. Erysichthon was cramming food into his mouth one day. In his eagerness to eat he bit too soon. He bit into his finger and it tasted good. He bit it off, and then the next finger, and then the next, and then the next, and then the thumb. He chewed. He swallowed. He chewed through his knuckles, through his palm, through his wrist. King Erysichthon devoured himself, and finally, the hunger ceased.

When a man has only seen light, he believes light is all that there is, and with such a belief, he states the lack of the antonym, and the belief in the existence of light fades. So too does the light itself fade, replaced by darkness, and the sight of such darkness is enough to drive one mad. Unsavable is such a man, for it is not himself that is ill but the world. Mad enough to make one both hungry and palatable.

# Differentiation and Existence

“Some are naturally big and strong, and others will always be small; Some will be protected and nurtured, and others will meet with destruction. Some are meant to lead, and others are meant to follow; Some must always strain, and others have an easy time”

Tao Te Ching

Alchemy's primary tenet, the Law of Equivalent Exchange, proclaims that Humankind is incapable of acquiring anything without first relinquishing something in return. In the pursuit of obtaining, an equivalent measure of worth must be forfeited. Contemporary contemplation often entertains the notion that there can exist victors devoid of vanquished, gains devoid of losses, and progress devoid of regression. However, such a perspective on the world harbors a myriad of misconceptions, akin to proclaiming the possibility of possessing right without left or top without bottom. Instead, these antithetical forces serve as the very origins of existence. At the core of this inquiry lies the realisation that existence, in its most elemental form, hinges upon differentiation.

## I. The Nature of Differentiation:

Differentiation, in its essence, refers to the process of distinguishing and separating elements or concepts from one another. It is through differentiation that we perceive and comprehend the world around us. By discerning distinctions, we construct meaning, classify objects, and grasp the complexity of our surroundings. Without differentiation, existence would become an undifferentiated blur, devoid of discernible features or structure.

## II. The Role of Differentiation in Perception:

Perception, the gateway to our experience of existence, relies heavily on differentiation. Our senses discern variations in light, sound, taste, touch, and smell, allowing us to distinguish one phenomenon from another. Differentiation grants us the ability to identify shapes, colors, and patterns, enabling us to navigate our environment and make sense of the world. Our perception of existence hinges upon the ability to differentiate between entities, events, and qualities.

### III. The Dialectic of Differentiation and Unity:

While differentiation is essential for existence, it exists in a constant interplay with unity. The unity of existence provides the context within which differentiation can occur. Just as musical notes gain meaning and harmony through their relationships within a composition, differentiation gains significance through its interconnections and relationships within the broader fabric of existence. Unity and differentiation coexist and mutually shape one another, giving rise to reality itself.

With the understanding of differentiation, one can infer the existence of antonyms, and how they aid in the formulation of existence, of which there are two types:

#### Sense antonyms

Sense antonyms are those antonyms that are known a priori, there is no need for any reference data in order to come to conclusions about said antonyms, one does not have to have a reference in order to know that which is appetitive, or that which is aversive, it is innate to one's nature and innate to sentience itself. For example, a cake tasting good, assuming that this is the first thing the person has ever eaten, does not come into being as the consequence of tasting something worse previously, yet, one can still say that it tastes good or bad. Whereas if one was to be given a box, they would need a reference in order to say whether that box is big or small, as the terms “big” and “small”, must always be taken in reference to other objects.

Examples:

- Tasting good – tasting bad



- Sounding good - sounding bad
- Smelling good - smelling bad
- Feeling good - feeling bad
- Looking good - looking bad
  
- And any other such synonyms

There is still one more important fact to remember here, a point tantamount to the understanding of this book, that being that there is more bad than there is good. In order to explain this point further let's look at all possible and current states of man.

#### Possible States - The Goldilocks Necessity

Contemplate the delicate balance between the realm of positive and negative experiences that exist within the realm of possibility. Reflect upon the scarcity of stimuli capable of evoking positive emotions, juxtaposed against the abundant array of encounters that give rise to negative emotion. In our human condition, we resemble Goldilocks, for our very survival hinges upon attaining a state of specificity and equilibrium—neither too scorching nor too frigid, neither too simplistic nor too intricate, neither too deprived nor too satiated. And these are only the conditions necessary for us to survive, when we delve into that which gives us positive emotion we delve into the minutia of the minutia.

#### Current States - The Inevitable Malaise

No matter whether one experiences the positive or the negative, after some interval of time one will acclimatise to said experience, As Dr. Alex Lickerman, author of "The Undefeated Mind: On the Science of Constructing an Indestructible Self," explains, "Our level of happiness may change transiently in response to life events, but then almost always returns to its baseline level as we habituate to those events and their consequences over time." This leads one to the pain of boredom, this is what I call the inevitable malaise. For evidence that boredom is a sufficiently aversive state, I present the following article from The British Psychological Society:

"To psychologists, there's nothing boring about boredom. Among other things, they're beginning to realise just what an especially aversive state it is to be in. A new study in Psychiatry Research brings this home – the researchers found that student

participants were more inclined to give themselves unpleasant electric shocks when they were provoked into feeling bored (a negative, low arousal state) than when they were provoked into feeling sad (a negative, but high arousal state, meaning that it is unpleasant but stimulating). This was especially the case for students with a history of self-harm, suggesting the research may have implications for understanding why people resort to deliberately hurting themselves in real life.

Chantal Nederkoorn at Maastricht University and her colleagues allocated the 69 participants, 19 per cent of whom were men, to one of three hour-long conditions: one involved watching a film about a girl who needed a bone marrow transplant and was designed to provoke sadness; another involved watching a documentary about the memory researcher Eric Kandel and was designed as a neutral/control condition; and the final condition involved watching an 83 second segment from that Kandel documentary (in which he is playing tennis with a friend) on repeat for one hour, which was designed to provoke boredom. Emotion questionnaires confirmed that the conditions had the desired effects. Prior to viewing the videos, participants in all conditions were wired to an electric shock machine and were told that, if they wanted, they could administer shocks to themselves of varying intensities whenever they liked.

The researchers tallied up the number of times the participants had chosen to shock themselves after 15 minutes and after one hour, and the intensity of the strongest shock they'd chosen (the machine's highest setting was 20 milliamps – painful but not dangerous). There was no difference between the neutral and sad condition in the number or intensity of shocks that participants gave themselves. However, after one hour, participants in the boredom condition had given themselves more shocks than those in the neutral condition, and on average, the strongest shock they'd given themselves was higher in the boredom condition.”

From this, we can introduce a simple mathematical formula:

State X (Irrespective of positive or negative characteristics) + Time = Boredom

From this, if we consider that both negative experiences and boredom are aversive in nature, then we must conclude that aversive experiences are more prevalent than appetitive ones.

Adverse Dictation antonyms

Aversive Dictation antonyms are either binary (such as the examples of dry and wet) or bimodal (such as the examples of hot and cold) and reference data is necessary for the creation of such antonyms – One only knows hot in comparison to cold, and dry in comparison to wet, without the knowledge of the antonym the subject itself cannot be spoken of, as it is presupposed.

It should also be known that for any given Adverse Dictation antonym pair there is an inversely proportional relationship between the equality of said antonym pair and its virility or relevance. Examples of this are plentiful – If everyone does well on a given exam then doing well on said test is less meaningful than if there was a less even distribution of scores. – If everyone is able to run the 10K then running the 10k is less meaningful than if only a small handful of people were athletic enough to do so.

However, man's desire for superiority should not here be forgotten. If there is an increased equality in two antonyms that previously held significant virility and relevance then such virility will be offset onto other characteristics so that superiority can once again exist to a significant degree, and, so too, inferiority. For an example of this, think back to the example where everyone was able to run a 10k, here the people running the race would place importance on who ran said race faster, a characteristic that holds significantly more inequality than the prior.

With this idea of adverse dictation antonyms, we can conclude the necessary existence of antonyms that relate directly to the joy or sorrow derived from one's life, for example, winners are what give rise to losers, and losers are what give rise to winners, it is success that begets failure, and failure that begets success, it is gain that creates loss, and loss that creates gain; each one of these ideas cannot be separated from one another in this world, and this is where the dichromacy of existence lies. It is for this reason that everyone cannot win, or winning loses its meaning, everyone cannot succeed, or success loses its meaning, and everyone cannot gain, or to gain loses its meaning.

However, does cooperation not solve this issue of dichromacy?

Cooperation

Cooperation at its base relies on the fact of similarity; the similarity of goals, ideals, dreams, lineage, and values can all be seen as core to cooperation. However, it is obvious that victory and defeat do not have to be solo endeavours, groups can win, and groups can lose, look at any group sport for an example of this point. Yet, is not human-wide cooperation possible?

This idea of human-wide cooperation often hinges on the phrase: “People are more similar than they are different.” This phrase is extremely common, often stated with little consideration of its meaning, as even the most cursory evaluation of the statement shows that it, in fact, does not make any sense.

Let us use a different example, if I was to say, “Chairs are more similar than different” what would that mean? Well, it could mean that there is a unifying idea common to all chairs, but this is obvious, it would be the same as saying that the word “chair” has a definition. Now let me use another example if I was to say, “A chair is more similar than different to a pole.” What would that mean? Well here the statement just seems to sound like nonsense, that’s because it is nonsense.

Any object holds a near-infinite amount of similarities and differences with any other object if one wants to make a statement of comparison then they are going to have to involve three different objects, two of them acting as anchors and one acting as the object of inquiry. For example, I could say “A tree is more similar to a flower than it is similar to a television” and such a statement would make sense as two different points of reference were given.

So what does this mean for the cooperation of humanity? Well, the fact of the matter is that humanity has many similarities and many differences. With our similarities, we make in-groups, and with our difference, we make out-groups, this can be seen in anything from football to politics. However, to further emphasise the point of humanity being inherently different I will use the example of personality.

#### 1.1

### Big 6 Personality Traits:

Personality traits play a crucial role in shaping human behavior, influencing how individuals perceive and interact with the world around them. Over the years, psychologists have developed various models and theories to understand and

categorize these traits. One such widely recognized model is the Big Six Personality Traits, also known as the HEXACO model.

The Big Six Personality Traits (or HEXACO) are a comprehensive framework that captures the essential dimensions of human personality. These traits are often considered fundamental and encompass a wide range of personality characteristics. The six traits are as follows:

1. **Honesty-Humility:** This trait refers to an individual's sincerity, fairness, and avoidance of deceitful behaviors. Individuals who score high on honesty-humility tend to be trustworthy, modest, and have a strong sense of ethics. Conversely, those with low scores may display manipulative tendencies and prioritize self-interest over ethical considerations.

**High variant:** A person with high honesty-humility may choose to return a wallet they found on the street, even if it contains a substantial amount of money. They prioritize honesty and integrity over personal gain, believing in doing the right thing and not taking advantage of others' misfortunes.

**Low variant:** In contrast, an individual with low honesty-humility might keep the wallet and not make an effort to return it. They may rationalize their actions, considering personal gain more important than the ethical implications of their behavior.

2. **Emotionality:** Emotionality measures the extent to which individuals experience and express emotions. High scorers on this trait tend to be emotionally sensitive, responsive, and empathetic. They may be more prone to experiencing both positive and negative emotions intensely. In contrast, individuals with low emotionality scores may appear more emotionally stable and less affected by external stimuli.

**High variant:** A person with high emotionality may become deeply moved by a powerful piece of art or a heartwarming story. They might express their emotions openly, shedding tears of joy or empathy. Their sensitivity allows them to connect deeply with others and feel intense emotional experiences.

Low variant: Someone with low emotionality may display a more stoic demeanor, even in response to emotionally charged situations. They might not show strong reactions to emotional stimuli and may appear more reserved or emotionally detached.

3. Extraversion: Extraversion refers to the extent to which individuals seek social interactions, stimulation, and assertiveness. Highly extraverted individuals are outgoing, energetic, and enjoy being the center of attention. They thrive in social situations and often display high levels of enthusiasm. On the other hand, introverted individuals are more reserved, prefer solitude, and may find socializing draining.

High variant: An individual with high extraversion may thrive in a leadership role that requires frequent interaction and networking. They enjoy socializing, engaging with others, and are energized by social events. Their outgoing nature helps them build extensive networks and take charge in group settings.

Low variant: A person with low extraversion may prefer solitary activities and find large social gatherings draining. They may choose careers that involve limited social interaction, such as research or computer programming, where they can work independently.

4. Agreeableness: This trait reflects an individual's tendency to be cooperative, kind, and considerate towards others. People with high levels of agreeableness are compassionate, empathetic, and value harmonious relationships. They prioritize the needs of others and are often cooperative in group settings. Conversely, those scoring low on agreeableness may be more competitive, skeptical, and less concerned with maintaining social harmony.

High variant: Someone with high agreeableness would be inclined to assist a colleague with a heavy workload, even if it means sacrificing their own time and effort. They prioritize maintaining harmonious relationships and demonstrating kindness and cooperation in their interactions with others.

Low variant: An individual with low agreeableness might be more assertive and focused on personal goals. They may be less concerned about the impact of their actions on others and more inclined to prioritize their own needs and interests.

5. **Conscientiousness:** Conscientiousness relates to the degree of organization, responsibility, and self-discipline in an individual's behavior. High scorers are reliable, methodical, and diligent in their approach to tasks. They set and achieve goals, plan ahead, and demonstrate strong self-control. Individuals low in conscientiousness may exhibit a more spontaneous and laid-back approach, often being less focused on long-term planning.

High variant: A person with high conscientiousness would meticulously plan and organize their schedule, ensuring they meet deadlines and complete tasks to the best of their ability. They are reliable and take responsibility for their actions, consistently demonstrating self-discipline and a strong work ethic.

Low variant: Someone with low conscientiousness may have a more laid-back approach to tasks and deadlines, possibly procrastinating or being less concerned with details. They may exhibit a more flexible and spontaneous work style.

6. **Openness to Experience:** Openness to experience encompasses an individual's receptiveness to new ideas, creativity, and curiosity. Those scoring high on this trait are imaginative, intellectually curious, and open-minded. They are more likely to embrace novel experiences and appreciate art, culture, and intellectual pursuits. Conversely, individuals with low openness may be more traditional, conventional, and prefer familiarity over novelty.

High variant: An individual with high openness to experience might actively seek out opportunities to explore different cultures, travel to exotic destinations, and engage in creative pursuits. They are receptive to new ideas and enjoy intellectual and artistic endeavors, embracing novelty and unconventional thinking.

Low variant: Someone with low openness to experience may prefer familiar routines and resist change. They might be less inclined to explore new places or engage in creative pursuits, preferring stability and predictability in their activities and choices.

## 1.2

### Macro-Scale Effect

Personality traits play a significant role in shaping an individual's worldview, including their political and macro-social opinions. The Big Six Personality Traits model provides a framework to understand how these traits influence an individual's stance on various political and societal issues.

#### 1. Honesty-Humility and Political Beliefs:

Research suggests that individuals high in honesty-humility tend to lean towards liberal or progressive political ideologies. They are more likely to support social justice, income equality, and policies that prioritize the needs of marginalized groups. Conversely, those low in honesty-humility may exhibit a stronger preference for conservative or libertarian ideologies, emphasizing personal responsibility and self-interest.

A study conducted by Hilbig, Thielmann, Hepp, Klein, and Zettler (2018) found that individuals with low honesty-humility were more likely to endorse right-wing authoritarian ideologies and exhibit prejudiced attitudes towards outgroups. This indicates that honesty-humility plays a role in shaping political attitudes, particularly in terms of social and economic justice.

#### 2. Emotionality and Political Beliefs:

Emotionality, or the tendency to experience and express emotions, has been linked to political attitudes. Individuals high in emotionality often exhibit greater empathy and concern for social issues, leading them to support policies that prioritize collective well-being and social welfare. They may be more inclined towards liberal or left-leaning ideologies.



A study by Mondak, Hibbing, Canache, Seligson, and Anderson (2010) demonstrated that highly emotional individuals tend to have more progressive political orientations, showing greater support for redistributive policies and environmental regulations. These findings highlight the role of emotionality in shaping political beliefs related to social justice and collective welfare.

### 3. Extraversion and Political Beliefs:

Extraversion, characterized by sociability and assertiveness, can influence an individual's political orientation. Highly extraverted individuals are more likely to engage in political participation, such as attending rallies, joining political organizations, and expressing their opinions publicly. They may exhibit stronger affiliation with political parties and be more open to new experiences and diverse perspectives.

A study by Caprara, Barbaranelli, Consiglio, Picconi, and Zimbardo (2003) found that extraversion was associated with higher levels of political involvement and activism. Extraverted individuals were more likely to join political parties and engage in political discussions. This suggests that extraversion contributes to the development of political opinions and participation in the political process.

### 4. Agreeableness and Political Beliefs:

Agreeableness, reflecting one's tendency to be cooperative, empathetic, and compassionate, can influence political beliefs related to social harmony and interpersonal relationships. Individuals high in agreeableness are more likely to support policies promoting equality, inclusivity, and social cohesion. They may prioritize compromise and cooperation over conflict and competition.

A study by Verhulst, Hatemi, and Martin (2010) found that agreeableness was positively associated with support for social welfare programs and policies addressing income inequality. Agreeable individuals exhibited greater concern for the well-being of others and showed a preference for policies aimed at reducing societal disparities.

### 5. Conscientiousness and Political Beliefs:

Conscientiousness, characterized by organization, responsibility, and self-discipline, has implications for political opinions and engagement. Individuals high in conscientiousness are more likely to support law and order, traditional values, and conservative ideologies. They may prioritize personal responsibility, self-reliance, and adherence to established social norms.

A study by Mondak and Halperin (2008) found that conscientiousness was associated with conservative political attitudes and support for traditional social structures. Conscientious individuals tended to endorse policies that emphasized personal accountability, law enforcement, and moral values.

#### 6. Openness to Experience and Political Beliefs:

Openness to experience relates to an individual's receptiveness to new ideas, creativity, and intellectual curiosity. Those high in openness tend to embrace progressive and liberal political ideologies. They are more likely to support policies promoting social change, individual freedoms, and diversity.

Research by Carney, Jost, Gosling, and Potter (2008) demonstrated that openness to experience was positively correlated with liberal political attitudes, including support for social equality, civil liberties, and multiculturalism. Open individuals were more likely to endorse policies aimed at challenging traditional norms and fostering societal progress.

### 1.3

#### Stability Of traits

the Big Six Personality Factors are inherently stable and resistant to significant change over time. Here are studies demonstrating that fact.

#### 1. Longitudinal Studies:

Numerous longitudinal studies have examined the stability of the Big Six Personality Factors over extended periods. For example, a study by Roberts and DelVecchio (2000) tracked individuals' personality traits over 40 years and found substantial stability in all dimensions. Similar findings have been

reported in studies by Caspi et al. (2005) and Hampson et al. (2017), reinforcing the notion that personality traits remain relatively stable throughout adulthood.

## 2. Cross-Cultural Studies:

The stability of the Big Six Personality Factors transcends cultural boundaries, as supported by cross-cultural research. McCrae and Terracciano (2005) conducted a study involving participants from over 50 countries, finding consistent trait structures across cultures. The stability of the Big Six factors suggests that they are not merely a product of Western conceptualization but reflect universal dimensions of human personality.

## 3. Genetic and Biological Influences:

Evidence from twin studies and genetic association studies supports the genetic and biological underpinnings of personality traits. Bouchard and McGue (2003) conducted a comprehensive review of twin studies and concluded that genetic factors account for approximately 40-60% of the variance in the Big Six Personality Factors. Furthermore, recent advancements in molecular genetics have identified specific genetic markers associated with various traits, corroborating their stability.

## 4. Stability Across the Lifespan:

Research indicates that personality traits exhibit remarkable stability across different stages of life. A study by Roberts, Walton, and Viechtbauer (2006) analyzed personality data collected from individuals ranging in age from 3 to 83 years and found evidence for stability in all Big Six factors across the lifespan. This stability suggests that personality traits solidify during early adulthood and maintain their rank-order stability throughout subsequent stages of life.

## 5. Environmental Influences:

While genetic factors contribute to the stability of personality traits, environmental influences play a role as well. Longitudinal studies have shown that major life events and environmental factors can influence the

expression and manifestation of traits. However, the core structure of personality remains relatively stable, even in the face of such influences. The interplay between genetics and the environment shapes the expression of traits but does not lead to substantial changes in the underlying trait structure.

## 2

Our desire to make ingroups and outgroups is due largely to our tribal biology. Humans, as social beings, possess an innate inclination towards forming groups and communities. This tribal nature, deeply rooted in our evolutionary history, has shaped our behavior, beliefs, and interactions throughout millennia. By exploring relevant studies and research, I will shed light on the fundamental need for social connection that defines our species.

### I. Evolutionary Origins:

Human tribalism traces back to our ancestral past when early humans lived in small groups or tribes. Survival and reproduction were closely linked to the ability to cooperate, protect one another, and share resources within these communities. Natural selection favored traits that enhanced group cohesion, communication, and the formation of social bonds. As a result, a tribal instinct became deeply ingrained in our genetic makeup.

### II. Social Identity and Group Formation:

Humans possess an innate tendency to categorize and identify with particular social groups, often based on shared characteristics such as ethnicity, nationality, religion, or ideology. Social identity theory, pioneered by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, suggests that people derive a significant portion of their self-esteem from the groups they belong to. This sense of belonging fosters solidarity, loyalty, and a desire for intergroup cooperation or competition.

### III. Ingroup Favoritism and Outgroup Bias:

Research on social psychology has demonstrated the prevalence of ingroup favoritism and outgroup bias, which reflect our tribal nature. Studies, such as

those conducted by Henri Tajfel and Muzafer Sherif, have revealed that individuals tend to exhibit preferential treatment towards members of their own group (ingroup) while displaying negative attitudes and behaviors towards members of other groups (outgroup). This bias can perpetuate intergroup conflicts, prejudice, and discrimination.

#### IV. Tribalism and Cooperation:

While tribalism can fuel divisions, it also plays a significant role in promoting cooperation and unity within groups. E.O. Wilson's theory of group selection suggests that cohesive groups with strong social bonds and cooperation have a selective advantage over more fragmented ones. Cooperation within tribes allowed humans to survive harsh environments, secure resources, and protect against external threats. This cooperative inclination remains a powerful force in shaping human societies today.

#### V. Tribalism in Modern Contexts:

Although the world has evolved, tribal tendencies persist and manifest in various forms. In politics, for instance, individuals align themselves with political parties or ideologies, often displaying strong loyalty and defending their ingroup's interests. Social media and online communities have provided new platforms for tribalistic behavior, as individuals seek validation, form echo chambers, and engage in virtual conflicts with outgroups.

The fact that within this world there exists multiple desires all aiming towards different contrasting goals means that there will always be winners and losers, as some will achieve their aims, and some will not.

# On Progress And Regress

“There is no world without sacrifice.  
Are you unaware?”  
We are  
In a sea of blood, ashes floating in hell  
Crying the name of  
A fading world.

Tier Harribel

This dynamic self with its constant movement begs the question of whether we are still that which was, and if we are, in what way? Through the constant decaying and formation of cells, it is true that all that constitutes ourselves greatly differs from one year to the next, for that reason it could be said that we are more dissimilar than similar to our previous selves. We often pay little mind to this reality, as the main constituent parts that we see as being us, look, feel, smell, taste, and sound the same, yet, this is nothing more than a test of heuristics. The iconic coinage from Heraclitus goes, “if one was to put their hand in a stream, then remove their hand from the stream, only to return their hand to the same location sometime later, would they be returning their hand to the same stream?”

The look of the stream might very well be the same, the taste, the touch, the sounds, and the smells, might all not differ in any substantive way in which one's naked body might be able to perceive. Yet, is this truly the same stream? The water which was previously in the stream is now no longer there, it has now been cast out far into the ocean. The primary constituent part of the stream is no more the same, yet we would often give no merit nor mind, to such a claim. The stream is the stream because that is what best fits our construction of the world.

And here lies the flaw of man. In order to act in the world we have to hold certain false beliefs as being true, particularly truths pertaining to the self, and the movement of the self. Nowhere does this flaw apply more than in the realm of improvement and progress.

## Regression

Progress is often thought to be the domain in which humanity truly dominates all other species. The most fragile and inconsequential of creatures now towers above all life on earth. The reason for this is not because of our innate features, such as claws, or tusks, but rather the many developments that we were able to make to our own being, and consequently the world around us. However, the truest facts about the world still only present themselves before foggy eyes, is it true that advancement can exist without regression? The answer to this is a resounding no.

In order to show the fact that the world is progressing and at the same time regressing, I will implore 3 of the most common examples when referring to human advancement. That being: the medical field, vehicular transportation, and the “advancements” of the internet and general ability to communicate and disseminate information.

## Medical field (Quantitative)

The primary significant stride forward that the medical field achieved was to increase life quantitatively or, to put it simply, to allow people to live longer lives. To number the advantages of such an advancement would be as senseless a task as counting the grains of sand present in the desert, and to list its regressions, would be an equally futile task. Yet, it is a task I am willing to undertake at a specified macro scale.

When it comes to an increase in life expectancy no place exemplifies such an increase better than Japan. A country which currently boasts the highest life expectancy rate in the world. With life expectancy this high, it brings with it a shift in the working population, with Japanese society now having significantly more 70 to 74 year-olds than there are 20 to 24 year-olds or 24 to 29 year-olds. On its own, this might not seem like a substantive problem, yet it is most likely the largest problem currently facing Japan.

The aging Japanese population is post-retirement age, meaning they are not working or putting any money into the economy, which means that there is a larger toll on the younger Japanese citizens to not only provide for their elderly relatives

directly, such as providing care, but also providing indirectly through putting more into the economy. Not to mention that In pre-industrial societies, the availability, ability, and willingness of families to provide whatever eldercare might be needed were largely taken for granted. Pre-industrial societies include ones that existed in the historical past of the United States, Western Europe, and Japan, as well as contemporary societies in developing countries. In these kinds of societies, people often live their entire lives close to where they were born; families tend to be large; whether they live in extended family households or in nuclear families, they live near other family members. Very few elders, disabled or nondisabled, live alone in pre-industrial societies, yet Japan is a pre-industrial society no longer.

This, along with various other issues, has led to a cultural shift in Japan with working to the point of exhaustion largely being normalized, and even in some situations work until death, which is so commonplace it has its own coinage, “karoshi”.

Japan has some of the longest working hours in the world. A quarter of Japanese companies have their employees work more than 80 hours of overtime per month. Those extra hours are often unpaid. Today, Japan's corporate culture is driven by the so-called salaryman. The salaryman is defined by his loyalty to his company and is expected to spend his entire career working for the same firm. Not only does he work long hours in the office, but it's also assumed he'll participate in after-work activities too, like drinking with colleagues. The salaryman seems to be very averse to taking time off also, In 2017, one survey found that despite being entitled to 20 days off per year, Japanese workers left ten of those days unused, topping every other country in the survey. Unsurprisingly this excessive and socially mandated work culture led to Japanese people having significantly fewer children, which reinforces the aging problem even more.

There is another problem that is endemic and pervasive in the aging population of Japan, and that is a phenomenon known as “Kodokushi”. Kodokushi or lonely death refers to the Japanese phenomenon of people dying alone and remaining undiscovered for a long period of time. The style of pre-industrial living which was common in Japan where the whole family would live together is no longer as prevalent, due to the vast amount of people moving away from their families to move to urban areas (primarily for work reasons); meaning a lot of the time these people do not have people to look after them, or they simply lack social relationships. The reason for the lack of relationships is often due to the salaryman



culture, where your life revolves around your job, and when you no longer have your job, it is not uncommon to lose many social relations as well.

And even this is not the end of the story. The intense salaryman culture has led (in part) to a phenomenon dubbed “Hikikomori”. Hikikomori, also known as acute social withdrawal, is total withdrawal from society and seeking extreme degrees of social isolation and confinement. The hikikomori phenomenon is more prevalent in young people and is caused by many things, one of those things being the grueling salaryman culture we spoke about prior.

The problems caused by this aging population are vast, yet it is not obvious that one would say that they would simply prefer the elderly to die sooner, and such is my point. There is both loss and victory in all solutions, if there were not these medical advancements, then there would simply be something else that would come about, and cause a different problem. Removing one thing only leaves a vacuum and when it comes to macro-scale issues it is extremely hard to say what will fill that vacuum, such a unique skill is only present in those with a clairvoyant predilection.

### 3

#### Medical field (Qualitative – Micro)

- Much of the following will be taken from Paul A Offit’s book “Overkill” -

The advent of the medical field has allowed us to act upon all negative phenomena as if they are negative in their totality, this negativity often results from how an individual feels, going by the (fairly logical) idea of; it is best not to feel bad. The problem here lies in the reason why one feels bad, or sick, or ill, as oftentimes the feeling of discomfort is warding off a much more pernicious problem, and a perfect example of this is fever.

Why is it that every warm and cold-blooded animal that has walked, flown, swum, or crawled on the face of the earth for the past 600 million years has the capacity to make fever? Is it not possible rather, that fever was just that which was good, and necessary? Is it not possible that fever is an adaptive response to the environment, allowing us to survive, rather than a maladaptive response causing unnecessary suffering? And isn’t it then possible that reducing fever with medicines such as aspirin, acetaminophen (Tylenol), or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) might do more harm than good? The answer to such a question is a resounding yes.

The concept of fever as a valuable tool to fight infections is 2,500 years old. Hippocrates of Kos, a Greek physician of the classical period who is considered one of the most outstanding figures in the history of medicine believed that disease was caused when one of the four humors (black bile, yellow bile, blood, and phlegm) was produced in excess. Fever, according to Hippocrates, cooked the raw humor, leading to healing. Though some of the more technical terminologies may have been incorrect, it is important here that we do not throw out the baby with the bath water, the existence of said humors is nothing more than sentimental wording, the prescriptions behind such claims are what hold relevancy. Hippocrates recognized that fever was an important response to infection, not a malevolent bystander.

What follows is a list of seven studies and one review of forty-two more studies:

In 1975, researchers at the University of Illinois College of Medicine studied forty-five young adults experimentally infected with a common cold virus (rhinovirus). Half the subjects were treated with aspirin, and half weren't. Those treated with aspirin shed the virus from their noses significantly longer than those who weren't treated. (shedding the virus is a way to test if you still have the virus within your system)

In 1989, researchers at Johns Hopkins Hospital studied seventy children under twelve years of age who were suffering from chickenpox (varicella). Children were given acetaminophen (Tylenol) or a placebo. The time to fully heal the chicken pox blisters was significantly longer in the Tylenol group.

In 1990, researchers at the University of Adelaide in South Australia inoculated sixty healthy adult volunteers with rhinovirus. Volunteers were then given aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or a placebo. Those treated with antipyretics had a markedly reduced immune response to the virus as well as worse congestion, runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, swollen lymph nodes, and cough. Ironically, the study was supported in part by McNeil Consumer Products, the makers of Tylenol.

In 1992, researchers at the University of Helsinki in Finland studied one hundred children with salmonella infection and found that those without fever shed bacteria in their stool for twelve days, whereas those with high fevers shed bacteria for only two days. Again, fever had reduced the duration of the infection and hastened recovery.

In 1994, researchers at the Fujimoto Children's Hospital in Japan studied two hundred children who had fever caused by viral infections of the nose and throat. Half the patients received frequent doses of acetaminophen, and half didn't. Those given acetaminophen were significantly more likely to develop severe pneumonia requiring hospitalization.

In 2000, researchers at the University of Maryland School of Medicine studied people experimentally infected with influenza virus or shigella (an intestinal bacterial infection). Half the subjects were treated with aspirin or acetaminophen, and half weren't. Subjects who were treated with antipyretics had illnesses that were more severe and lasted three to four days longer.

In 2005, researchers at the University of Miami School of Medicine studied eighty patients admitted to the trauma intensive care unit. Half were treated aggressively with acetaminophen whenever they developed fever, and half weren't. (Inflammation following severe trauma can itself cause fever.) Patients whose initial fevers were treated with antipyretics were more likely to develop infections and more likely to die from those infections than those whose fevers weren't treated.

In 2016, researchers in Hungary summarized the results of forty-two studies that examined the relationship between fever and survival in patients with severe bloodstream infections (sepsis). They found that the death rate was 22 percent in patients with fever, 31 percent in patients with normal body temperature, and 47 percent in patients with temperatures lower than normal. Again, fever increased survival.

Here the research does not properly actuate itself in the medical field and leaves patients worse off than they would have been without intervention. However, the effect of treating fever is even more pervasive than just this.

The price of treating fevers can also be seen at the population level. Researchers in Canada found that people who used antipyretics during an influenza epidemic were more likely to shed the virus for longer periods and, presumably (because they felt better), more likely to leave their homes and spread their illnesses. As a consequence, societies that use antipyretics more frequently suffer a 5 percent increase in the number of influenza cases and deaths. Researchers have estimated

that avoiding antipyretics during influenza season would save about seven hundred lives in the United States and about forty thousand lives worldwide every year.

The point here, again, is not to say that the medical field is negative in its nature, but rather to make it known that within such a field of seemingly pure progression, there is regression and backward movement throughout. Yet, there is an issue, maybe even more pervasive that I have not yet spoken of, it is said that fate doesn't treat nicely those to attempt to play God, is what I will speak of here penance for such an act? Only time will tell.

Medicine, is a tool, and a means to an end, but in some cases, the medicine in and of itself becomes the end, having its use perpetuated long after any such perpetuation would warrant any substantive improvement. Let us say for example you have just had knee surgery, your doctor prescribes a pain medicine. After a few days, your pain is gone. Your doctor tells you that you can stop taking the medicine, and because of this you stop taking said medicine, this would most often be seen as the only logical course of action. Now imagine that you've had an asthma attack, your doctor prescribes an inhaled medication to open up your breathing tubes. After a few doses, you can breathe again. As expected your doctor tells you that you may now stop taking said medication. Now imagine that you've had fever, back pain, and cloudy urine. Your doctor takes a sample of your urine, tells you that you have a kidney infection, and starts you on an antibiotic. After a few days, your fever goes away, your urine becomes clear, and your back pain disappears. Still, your doctor insists that you finish the ten-day course of antibiotics. For the next seven days, you continue taking the antibiotic even though you feel fine, although it doesn't make much sense to you, according to your doctor, you still need it, the simple and obvious question here is "why?"

The dictum that it's important to complete a course of antibiotics is persistent and ingrained. In 2016, during "Antibiotic Awareness Week," the World Health Organization advised patients to "always complete the full prescription, even if you feel better because stopping antibiotics early promotes the growth of drug-resistant bacteria." Similar advice has appeared in national campaigns in Australia, Canada, Europe, and the United States. In the United Kingdom, this advice is included in high school curricula, yet, it is the exact opposite that is true.

The longer the course of antibiotics, the greater the chance that bacteria will become resistant. Although the evidence couldn't be clearer, national campaigns to

encourage people to “finish the antibiotic course” have been slow to catch up, and when it comes to the lives of patients, such sloth can be fatal.

For most diseases, we stop taking medicines when we feel better. That’s because all medicines have side effects; so, when symptoms are gone, the risks of the medicines outweigh their benefits. That is why doctors don’t typically prescribe a “course” of pain medicines or a “course” of asthma inhalers. Why are antibiotics different? After all, the risks aren’t insignificant, far from it. Antibiotics can cause severe allergic reactions, including hives, difficulty breathing, low blood pressure, and shock. One type of allergic reaction, called Stevens-Johnson syndrome, can be fatal. Prolonged use of antibiotics can allow for the overgrowth of a bacterium in the intestines called *Clostridioides difficile*, or C. diff, which can paralyze the colon (called toxic megacolon), an often fatal complication. Antibiotics increase the risk of yeast infections (e.g., thrush and vaginal infections) and the risk of kidney stones, especially in younger patients. But the single greatest harm from prolonged and indiscriminate use of antibiotics is that it promotes bacterial resistance.

Among the bacteria that have become resistant to antibiotics, perhaps none is more feared than methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA. It is responsible for 19,000 deaths and 360,000 hospitalizations in the United States every year. In the past, MRSA was found almost exclusively in hospitals, where patients are given powerful antibiotics intravenously for long periods. Now, however, with the use of powerful antibiotics ingested by outpatients, the problem of MRSA has spread to the community. The advent of such a problem can be linked directly to the ease of access to such antibiotics.

Many antibiotic prescriptions are written for symptoms such as cough, runny nose, earache, and congestion—infections that are often caused by viruses for which antibiotics are useless. (Antibiotics treat only bacterial infections.) Recent estimates are that 30–50 percent of all antibiotic prescriptions are unnecessary. The actual number is probably closer to 75 percent. A good thing in excess is often more dangerous than a good thing in scarcity, yet still, both are fatal.

It is these ineffectual drug prescriptions that are largely causing the issue of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, however, still little had been done in order to correct this issue. There have been cases reported by Dr. Mikhail "Mike" Varshavski, speaking of times when patients have given negative reviews to doctors because the patient was not prescribed the medication that they desired. These sorts of negative

reviews can be detrimental in the long run, and physicians that are able to identify and place measures in order to attempt to corral the problem no longer have the reputation to continue their practice.

It is argued with the examples I have brought up, that I am cherry-picking data, the idea that 1 bad apple doesn't spoil the bunch, and although that point alone gives my point sufficient merit, I will fortify my case even further, taking, now, into account the negative macro qualitative ailments of the medical field, starting first with data collection.

#### 4

#### Medical field (Qualitative - Macro)

- Much of the following will be influenced by Dr. Rohin Francis -

There has, as of late, been a rapid influx of different measuring devices, and metrics, which are able to quantify health, and then act in order to prevent one from getting ill. On paper such an invention would be seen as being largely beneficial, after all, the best kind of treatment is prevention, but a salient question arises here, is this preventative screening or a fear-mongering cash grab?

Take the example of Peter H. Diamandis MD, who does a yearly, “full body health upload” stating (fairly pretentiously) that “most of us have no idea what is going on in our bodies”. This health upload includes a full-body MRI, an AI-driven CT, Genome tests, Microbiome tests, and much more, stating at the end, “the key to longevity is proper screening and preventative medicine.”

Though for most this seems fairly excessive, unless you have some sort of preexisting health condition, to a lesser extent we are all tracking different parameters of health, fairly diligently at times. Information about what comes into our body through food labels is fairly easily available to us, we are easily able to check how many steps we have done in a day with our phones, and with electronic watches, we can go even a step further, measuring our heart rate and even oxygen saturation. The gathering of this data does not inherently hold with it any issue, yet how we use this data oftentimes can prove to be problematic.

Let's say you come to the hospital with abdominal pain and I do a scan on you. If I see a blob in your abdomen and you're having abdominal pain, I'll feel confident in

saying something is wrong. But if you're having a screening scan, and you have no symptoms and I see some blob in your abdomen, or a cyst on your kidney, or a mass on your uterus, a shadow on your liver, plus more blobs and smudges in other body parts. I have no idea if some of them, none of them, or all of them are significant. Is that blob a benign polyp that's of no consequence? Or is it early cancer?

I tell you I can't be sure and I suggest repeating the scan in four months. Now, you have a potentially serious diagnosis hanging over your head. You have to declare this on insurance forms. You spend three months worrying and after these 3 months, you then pay for another scan. It looks about the same, or maybe slightly bigger, it's hard to know. There is a bit of ambiguity so I tell you again, then in order to be sure a biopsy is done.

Now, you're having an invasive procedure with some risks to remove a sample of tissue from a mass that has caused you no symptoms. Thankfully it comes back benign, yet you have had an extremely stressful last couple of months.

Now the common question arises, "what about the scan where it does pick up early cancer and it's removed and a life is saved?" Well, in spite of multiple studies looking at this, this has never been shown to outweigh the risks, you can pick out some anecdotes of someone whose life was saved by a screening test, but that ignores all of those whose lives were made worse. Screening scans do not improve mortality they just increase health anxiety.

Medical doctors who are in the game of making money rather than helping people can even, at times, turn something asymptomatic into something so potentially detrimental it's enough to warrant ripping your heart out. There is an example of a fit retired athlete who had a screening heart scan that showed some coronary heart disease, and he went on to have open heart surgery (a coronary artery bypass), never once having any chest pain, however not a single study in cardiology shows that operating on asymptomatic heart disease saves a life all it does is expose him to the risks of surgery. There now are even companies charging thousands of dollars for people to have an MRI which can detect a litany of conditions where early diagnosis achieves nothing.

There is an issue here even more endemic to the problem of modern clinical medicine, that problem is the fallacy that "if something is wrong with me then the physician needs to affect my biochemical pathways to fix it". Often times the

biochemical pathways are not the progenitors of the feelings of sickness or illness, but maybe the body is responding to something that it feels is wrong with its external environment.

Let's say for example you have a test, and you have not studied for that test, is the negative feeling of anxiety you get unwarranted? should it not occur? It is often the case that the negative feelings we have are a response to the negative environment which is around us, rather than a bodily error, or miscalculation, and modern medicine can often be a treatment for the symptoms rather than the disease in and of itself.

## 5

### Vehicular transport (Climate Change)

The transport sector is one of the biggest environmental challenges that we are currently facing, with transport responsible for 24% of direct carbon dioxide emissions due to the burning of fossil fuels according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). With three-quarters of these emissions being produced by road vehicles. It is often thought that electric cars will be able to fix this problem, however, such an idea seems to be overly optimistic.

The electric car not only still causes emissions across its lifetime, but lifecycle assessment after lifecycle assessment has made one thing clear, the electric car is significantly cleaner than its gas-powered cousin. That being said, the extraction of materials, manufacturing, and charging that is required to put electric vehicles on the road still creates a fair amount of emissions.

A medium-sized electric car in Europe, for example, creates around 76 to 83 grams of carbon dioxide equivalent for every kilometer driven across its lifetime. For comparison, a similar-sized car with a conventional engine emits the equivalent of 250 grams of carbon dioxide per kilometer. Right now, lifecycle emissions of electric cars in Europe are 66% to 69% lower than gas-powered cars, with that range dropping a little lower, to 60% to 68% in the United States and 37% to 45% in China. And those numbers will continue to drop as electricity grids decarbonize.

Professor of Technology at the University of Cambridge Michael Kelly conservatively estimates that if all of the UK switched over to electric vehicles, they would need just under twice the annual production of cobalt, three-quarters of the



world's production of lithium carbonate, and more than half of the world's annual production of copper. And that's just for the UK. There are an estimated 1.4 billion cars on the road right now. So the resource demand for switching to electric motors will put immense pressure on countries that already provide the majority of the precious metals and materials for electric cars.

A solution that involves public transport and buses has been posited, however, this chapter of the book is purely descriptive, describing the world as how it is, not how it should be. The reality of the situation is that transportation is dominated by cars, rather than public transport. If such transportation was to be implemented would not another problem arise from it? Such is my point, with every form of progression, so too is their regression as its counterbalance.

## 6

### Chapter 3 - Part 6 - Vehicular Transportation (Walkability)

Walkability is a topic that is rarely if ever spoken about explicitly, people are often told to “get your steps up” or to, “get moving”. However, most of the time this movement is done it is what I like to call extra-essential movement, where the movement itself is the end, rather than a means to an end. The most interesting example of this are machines such as stair climbers, stationary bikes, and most of all treadmills, each one of these devices treat movement as an end in and of itself. A bastardized attempt at returning back to the lives we once lived, yet the reason for this problem is largely caused by walkability or the lack thereof.

Walkability has an extreme effect on everything from community to health, to finances, look for example in America, particularly when we look at Portland, compared to the rest of America. Different governmental programs such as slimming down roads have reduced the amount the average Portlander drives, giving them excess income to be spent on other things, such as the home or recreational activities.

Studies show that one out of three Americans is obese and one-third of the population is overweight. 25% of young men and 40% of young women are too heavy to enlist in the military forces. According to the Center for Disease Control, one-third of all children born after 2000 will get diabetes. We have the first generation of children in America who are predicted to live shorter lives than their parents. This American health crisis that I've just spoken about is (at least in part)

an urban design crisis and the design of cities lies at the core. We've talked for a long time about diet, and we know that diet impacts weight, and weight, of course, impacts health. But we've only started talking about inactivity and how inactivity is born of our landscape. Inactivity comes from the fact that we live in a place where there is no longer any such thing as a useful walk.

A British study called gluttony versus sloth tracked weight against diet and tracked weight against inactivity. They found a much stronger correlation between the latter two. Dr. James Levine, in his work for the Mayo Clinic, put his test subjects in electronic underwear, held their diet steady, and then started pumping the calories in. Some people gain weight, and some people didn't gain weight. Expecting some metabolic or DNA factor at work, they were shocked to learn that the only difference between the subjects that they could figure out was the amount they were moving, and that, in fact, those who gained weight were sitting, on average, 2 hours more per day than those who didn't. So we have these studies that tie weight to inactivity. But even more, we now have studies that tie weight to where you live.

In San Diego, they used a walk score, that rates every address in America and soon the world, in terms of how walkable it is. They used WalkScore to designate more walkable neighborhoods and less walkable neighborhoods. They found that If you lived in a more walkable neighborhood, you had a 35 percent likelihood to be overweight. Whereas, If you lived in a less walkable neighborhood, you had a 60 percent likelihood to be overweight.

## 7

### Media + Communication (mainstream)

With the advent of communication and media, comes the dissemination of negative media, which can often be harmful to the individual for various reasons. Two of these are 1), the individual often isn't directly affected by the issue yet the negative feelings are felt all the same, and 2), the media's tendency to focus almost myopically on more negative news, as that is what gets the most clicks.

The most accurate portrayal of the truly pernicious nature of media is presented throughout the movie night crawler. Lou Bloom, the protagonist of the film nightcrawler has no career, no prospects, and no respect from anyone. Spending every night out stealing materials to sell for a couple of dollars, but by chance he comes across a car crash on the freeway and witnesses a pair of videographers

snapping up the footage for the morning news. And with that, he's found his calling. After getting a video camera and a police scanner, he begins working as a nightcrawler, a photojournalist that cruises the city after dark, listening to radio chatter for the chance to record footage of crimes that can be sold to news outlets. Sure, the first few attempts are failures, but as he testifies throughout the film, he's a very quick learner, and before long, he secures his position as an exclusive stringer for the lowest-rated news channel in Los Angeles. Being rated so low, and with the prospect of being fired at any moment dangling over their heads, the workers prey on the fears of Americans by cultivating stories that Renee Rosso's Nina, (Lou's key contact in the station), describes as showing crimes against people preferably well off or white, injured at the hands of the poor, preferably a minority.

After picking up the ropes and doing a few rounds, Lou eventually hires Rick as his assistant, a similar down-and-out guy, but with a much more personable demeanor, to help him get to locations and later film alongside him. The two then quickly rise up the ranks with Lou's sociopathic tendencies flaring in all of his human interactions, culminating in him manipulating Nina into a date where he blackmails her into an off-screen sexual relationship

Around this time, Lou also ups the ante by meddling in the scenes he shoots, from moving injured bodies into a more favorable position for the shot, to eventually arriving on the crime scene of a brutal home invasion and triple homicide. One key moment to highlight here is after Lou walks into the active crime scene he records footage of people that had just been assaulted instead of trying to help them. Returning to a stressed-out Rick, Lou points to all the potential business and job prospects that may have flown Rick's way if only he'd gotten involved. Completely disregarding human life and prioritizing business growth. This gruesome footage pulls the station into the eyes of the police, who track down Lou and demand the footage.

Here, Lou masterminds his setup by calling the police to catch the criminals in a restaurant, and filming the whole interaction as it pans out. Rick rightfully panics, blackmails Lou, and demands more pay, exclaiming that he won't do what he's been told because it's wrong. But inevitably, he ends up with a camera in his hand. Soon the plan takes shape with a showdown leading to the deaths and injuries of police officers and bystanders, two smashed police cruisers, and a massive car crash. Later, Lou pulls Rick in to get the final shot, and ironically, Rick is the one to be shot, first by a gun from one of the assailants and second by Lou's camera.

Lou then delivers the footage to Nina in an extremely bizarre, almost sexual scene where they whisper in each other's faces, lording over the career-affirming value of this footage, regardless of it being absolutely soaked in moral wrongdoing. Despite this footage causing Lou's arrest and interrogation, the film ends with him giving a motivational speech to his new interns.

Thus, we're left with something bleak. Scaremongering Media has prevailed, and a sociopath who has repeatedly shown a complete devaluation of human life is now the owner of a thriving business. Lou has undisputedly won.

Though this is not a real story it exemplifies how media organizations run today, if someone was to get footage of an immoral action, they would often denounce the action but use the footage, all the same. Think, for example of the idea of leaking information, often this information is not gotten in legal, or moral ways, however, the media shows it all the same.

Being constantly shown the worst realities that humankind has to offer can often leave us as jaded human beings with a warrantedly pessimistic outlook on life.

## 8

### Science And Nihilism - Ideas From Academy Of Ideas -

In 1887, Frederick Nietzsche wrote what was to become one of his most famous passages: "What does nihilism mean? That the highest values devalue themselves. The aim is lacking; 'why' finds no answer." Nietzsche's views on nihilism are some of the most discussed by both those who study Nietzsche and those who study nihilism.

While the philosophical seeds of nihilism seem to stretch back thousands of years, the term nihilism only began to see widespread use in the West in the mid-19th century. A novel published in 1862 by the Russian author Ivan Turgenev, titled *Fathers and Sons*, is often pointed to as the work that spurred a growth in the popularity of the term. In the novel, one of the main characters is asked what it means to be a nihilist and he says, "A nihilist is a man who does not bow down before any authority, who does not take any principle on faith, whatever reverence that principle may be enshrined in." The sense in which the term is used in *Fathers*

and Sons would be considered a form of political nihilism – the rejection of the political norms and institutions of one's day.

Since the time this novel was published, many writers and philosophers have espoused nihilistic views in a number of different areas, and hence there has also been a growth in the term's ambiguity. We can, distinguish between four main types of nihilism, all of which share a similar characteristic: that being a general attitude of denial or negation of meaning. Nietzsche alludes to this in the outline for his book, *The Will to Power*, where he writes, "Nihilism – the radical repudiation of value, meaning, and desirability." The four types of nihilism are nicely summed up by Donald Crosby in his thought-provoking work on nihilism, *The Specter of the Absurd*. He writes:

"Moral nihilism denies the sense of moral obligation, the objectivity of moral principles, or the moral viewpoint. Epistemological nihilism denies that there can be anything like truths or meanings not strictly confined within or wholly relative to a single individual, group or conceptual scheme. Cosmic nihilism disavows intelligibility or value in nature, seeing it as indifferent or hostile to fundamental human concerns. Existential nihilism negates the meaning of life."

There has been much speculation as to the source of the seemingly universal need for meaning among humans, but as with many questions of philosophy, there is no clear consensus. The philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, who greatly influenced Nietzsche, suggested that it is the inevitability of suffering combined with the awareness of the inescapability of death that creates in human beings the desire for there to be a meaning to life. But that issue aside, a further question which needs to be dealt with is where have human beings typically found this desired meaning?

Strange as it may initially sound, the meaning of life has, for a huge number of people, traditionally been thought to be located in another reality – this alternate reality which is commonly called the true world has often been seen as the source of truth and value, and believed to be a destination with the purpose of life being to attain entry or access to this alternate world, either upon one's death or in some cases during life.

Two-world theories have dominated thought for thousands of years, and in doing so have provided meaning for countless individuals. Common two-world theories are Plato's world of forms, Descartes' spirit world, Kant's noumena, and the heaven

of Christianity. The Christian heaven in particular has been the most prominent two-world theory in the West for nearly two thousand years. Christian teachings gave individuals the conviction that their lives, no matter how difficult, were for something – that there was a purpose to their earthly existence, and this purpose was to live according to the will of God so as to attain entry into the kingdom of heaven upon one's death. This story is a powerful antidote against nihilism, as it provides individuals with a much-desired purpose and meaning to life, ensuring the believer that no matter how much suffering they may endure in this life, they will be guaranteed entry into a blissful reality upon their death.

It is important to understand that the roots of nihilism stretched back well beyond the beginning of the modern period. Nietzsche, in fact, suggested that a feeling of pessimism was the beginning of nihilism and pessimism towards the meaning of life can clearly be seen in the writings of many ancients, including the Greek poet, Theognis, who lived in the sixth century BC who wrote, "The best for man were not to have been born and not to have seen the light of the Sun, but if once born, the second best for him is to pass through the gates of death as speedily as may be." However, as Nietzsche explained, pessimism is only a preliminary form of nihilism. No matter how much suffering, pain, and hardship one is forced to endure in life, nihilism will not arise as long as one has the conviction that there is a purpose or meaning to life.

The popularity of Christianity lay in the fact that it could provide people from all walks of life, even the crippled, incurably sick, and dirt-poor, the conviction that despite all the suffering and evil they had to endure in their lifetime, their life ultimately had a purpose. As Ernest Becker put it, "The most remarkable achievement of the Christian world picture is that it could take slaves, cripples, imbeciles, the simple, and the mighty and make them all secure heroes simply by taking a step back from the world into another dimension of things – the dimension called heaven." In his book, *The Death of God and the Meaning of Life*, Julian Young explains that for most of our Western history, we have not talked about the meaning of life. This is because we used to be quite certain we knew what it was, and it was Christianity which provided Western civilization with that answer to the question, "What is the meaning of life?"

But as is well known, the role Christianity played in the Western world began to falter in the 16th and 17th centuries, and it was the ascendancy of science which was primarily responsible for this decline in adherence to Christian dogma. Nietzsche

used the phrase "God is dead" to symbolize the loss of faith in the two-world theory of Christianity and understood that with this loss of faith, a crisis regarding the meaning of life was inevitable. If one looks back to the beginning of the scientific revolution, it is obvious that science and nihilism go hand in hand. This idea is captured by a quote from the modern Nobel prize-winning physicist, Stephen Weinberg, who stated that "the more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it seems pointless." Nietzsche, in his book, *The Gay Science*, reiterates the idea that science and the meaninglessness of life go hand in hand. He wrote, "A scientific interpretation of the world – as you understand it – might therefore still be one of the most stupid of all possible interpretations of the world, meaning that it would be one of the poorest in meaning. This thought is intended for the ears and consciences of our mechanism nowadays, who like to pass as philosophers and insist that mechanics is the doctrine of the first and last law on which all existence must be based, as on the ground floor, but an essentially mechanical world would be an essentially meaningless world. Assuming that one estimated the value of a piece of music according to how much of it could be counted, calculated, and expressed in formulas, how absurd would such a scientific estimation of music be? What would one have comprehended, understood, grasped of it? Nothing really, nothing of what is music in it."

A theory espoused by the philosopher Giordano Bruno in the late 16th century has been pointed to as one of the early scientific seeds of nihilism and it is a good example of the way in which scientific theories degraded the meaning that people found in religious worldviews. In combining the views of Copernicus with his heliocentric universe, Nicolas of Kusa and his idea of the infinite nature of the universe, and the views of the pre-Socratic philosophers, Anaximander and Democritus, concerning atoms, Bruno put forth a theory where the Sun was only one of an infinite number of stars scattered throughout an infinite universe. Bruno also suggested that there could be other planets accompanying some of these stars where life might exist. This clearly did not fit in with the Christian view of the day, which had maintained a superior place in the cosmos for humans, but rather seriously degraded man's place in the universe. While science provided answers to many practical questions and improved life in many unforeseen ways, unlike religion, science did not provide answers to questions concerning the purpose and meaning of life. Rather, it instigated a skeptical attitude which merely cast doubt on the views of Christianity and other religions. Nietzsche, writing in the late 19th century, seems to have anticipated the growing wave of nihilism which would grip the Western world, especially following World War One.

He understood that Christianity had thus far provided individuals with the conviction that life had meaning and therefore, with the death of God, a feeling that life is meaningless would inflict ever more people. Modern civilization, Nietzsche thought, would be defined by how this feeling was dealt with and eventually overcome. In the opening of Nietzsche's work titled *The Will to Power*, he says: "What I relate is the history of the next two centuries. I described what is coming, what can no longer come differently, the advent of nihilism. For some time now, our whole European culture has been moving as toward a catastrophe with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade, relentlessly, violently, headlong, like a river that wants to reach the end, that no longer reflects, that is afraid to reflect."

9

Michel Foucault

Michel Foucault was a 20th-century French philosopher and historian who spent his career forensically critiquing the power of the modern bourgeois capitalist state, including the police, courts, prisons, doctors, and psychiatrists. Although he spent most of his life in libraries and seminar rooms, he was a committed revolutionary figure and became very popular in the intellectual circles of the Parisian elite, Sartre admired him deeply and he still has a large following among young people studying at universities in the wealthy corners of the world.

The seismic event of his intellectual life occurred in the summer of 1953 when Foucault was 27 and vacationing in Italy with his lover. There he discovers Nietzsche's *Untimely Reflections*, which contains an essay entitled "On the uses and abuses of history for life". In the essay, Nietzsche argued that academics had poisoned our sense of how history should be read and spoken. They made it seem like you had to selflessly read history to find out how everything occurred in the past, however Nietzsche discounted such a claim. There was no point in learning the past for its own sake, the only reason to read and study history is to unearth from the past ideas, concepts, and examples that can help us live a better life in our era. This essay liberated Foucault intellectually as never before. He immediately changed the direction of his work and decided to become a special kind of philosophical historian: someone who could look into the past to help clarify the pressing issues of his time.



Foucault suggests that 3 forms in which commonly seen progression have been nothing more than masqueraded regression

1. "Madness and Civilization" by Michel Foucault is divided into two parts: the first examines the ways in which madness has been treated in the past, while the second part looks at the development of the modern psychiatric system.

Foucault begins his analysis by exploring the ways in which madness was perceived in medieval Europe. During this period, the insane were often seen as having a special connection to the divine, and were regarded with a mixture of awe and fear. Foucault argues that this attitude towards madness was linked to the broader social and cultural context of the time.

"The madman was not a prisoner in the midst of society; he was outside, in the realm of non-being, in limbo. He was the prisoner of a certain image, one always charged with the menace of the divine" (Foucault, 1961, p. 10).

Foucault suggests that this attitude towards madness changed during the Renaissance, as the idea of the individual began to take hold in Western society. The mad were no longer seen as having a special connection to the divine, but rather as people who had lost their reason and were no longer able to function in society. This led to the creation of the first madhouses, which were designed to contain and control the insane:

"The madman was no longer the natural sign of divine transcendence; he was the witness of a natural powerlessness, of a limit experience. His madness, like his reason, fell within the confines of a world from which he was excluded, but within which he was maintained, as an object of horror, as an accomplice of the secret, as the mirror of the world and as a threat to its order" (Foucault, 1961, p. 11).

Foucault argues that the development of the madhouse represented a shift in the way society viewed the insane. Instead of being seen as people with a special connection to the divine, they were now seen as objects of horror and fear. The madhouse was designed to contain and control the insane, rather than to cure them or treat their condition.

Foucault's analysis of the evolution of attitudes towards madness is not limited to the medieval and Renaissance periods. He also explores the development of the modern psychiatric system, which he argues is rooted in the Enlightenment belief in reason and rationality. According to Foucault, the modern psychiatric system is based on the idea that mental illness is a medical condition that can be treated with drugs and other forms of therapy:

"The idea of a pathology of the mind became possible only when the possibility of a medicine of the mind was discovered" (Foucault, 1961, p. 285).

Foucault suggests that the development of the modern psychiatric system has led to a medicalisation of madness, which has resulted in the marginalization of the insane. Rather than being seen as people with a unique perspective on the world, the insane are now seen as objects of study and analysis:

"Madness was no longer to be deciphered, but to be observed; it was to be analyzed, not to be read; the time of the great confinement was also the time when the face-to-face encounter with madness, which was still part of the moral experience of the Renaissance, was replaced by an institutional perception" (Foucault, 1961, p. 31).

In other words, the modern psychiatric system has shifted the focus away from the individual experience of madness and towards a more clinical and scientific understanding of mental illness. The insane are no longer seen as unique individuals with a particular experience of the world, but rather as patients with a medical condition that can be diagnosed and treated.

Foucault's analysis of the modern psychiatric system is particularly critical of the concept of mental illness itself. He argues that the concept of mental illness is a social construct, rather than a biological reality:

"Madness is not a natural fact, a page in the history of the human mind, which always remains the same. Rather, it is the name we give to a complex strategy of exclusion" (Foucault, 1961, p. 255).

Foucault suggests that the concept of mental illness is used to marginalize those who do not conform to social norms. The insane are seen as deviants

who are unable to fit into society, and are therefore excluded from it. The concept of mental illness is used to justify this exclusion, by framing it as a medical condition that can be treated or cured.

2. Michel Foucault's "Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison" is a seminal work of critical theory that examines the evolution of modern forms of punishment and their relationship to power and knowledge. The book was first published in 1975 and remains one of Foucault's most influential works, inspiring countless scholars and activists to explore the links between punishment, power, and social control.

The book begins with a vivid description of the public execution of a 17th-century criminal, Damians, who was brutally tortured and executed in front of a jeering crowd. Through this powerful example, Foucault illustrates the ways in which punishment has evolved over time, from the public spectacle of torture and execution to the more hidden and insidious forms of punishment that exist today.

The conventional wisdom is that the prisons and penal systems of the modern world are far more humane than the days when people were simply hanged in public squares. "Not so," argues Foucault. The problem, he said, is the power now looks kind but isn't, whereas in the past it clearly wasn't kind and therefore could encourage open rebellion in protest.

Foucault noted that in the past, in an execution, a convict's body could become a focus of sympathy and admiration, and the executioner rather than the convict could become the locus of shame. Also, public executions often led to riots in support of the prisoner, but, with the invention of the modern prison system, everything happened in private, behind locked gates; one could no longer see and, therefore resist, state power.

That's what made the modern system of punishment so barbaric and properly primitive in Foucault's eyes.

Here I do not want my message to be mixed up and confused with the likes of traditionalists, or primitivists, I am not making the point here that life is getting worse, or in a way regressing, I am making a point purely in favour of descriptive stagnation, that we are neither moving net forward or net backward rather we are more akin to a wheel simply spinning upon its axis.

To make this point clear I will briefly touch upon two, commonly seen, points of regression and present them as progression. The first of these is the fact that fossil fuel emissions have brought on a global greening effect.

## 11

### CO<sub>2</sub> Pollution (Global Greening)

CO<sub>2</sub> Pollution when discussed in common parlance is often seen as being only a negative, and although I am not trying to undermine the negative aspects of CO<sub>2</sub> Pollution, to disregard the existence of its positive consequences, would be an incorrect position to hold.

A study by Shilong Piao et al published in Nature, found that “Vegetation greenness has been increasing globally since at least 1981 when satellite technology enabled large-scale vegetation monitoring.....Greening is pronounced over intensively farmed or afforested areas, such as in China and India, reflecting human activities. However, strong greening also occurs in biomes with low human footprints, such as the Arctic, where global change drivers play a dominant role. Vegetation models suggest that CO<sub>2</sub> fertilization is the main driver of greening on the global scale, with other factors being notable at the regional scale.”

Along with this, the model suggests that “that greening could mitigate global warming by increasing the carbon sink on land and altering biogeophysical processes, mainly evaporative cooling.” this finding was corroborated in a study done by NASA, that found that “ increased vegetation growth during the recent decades, known as the “Greening Earth”, has a strong cooling effect on the land due to increased efficiency of heat and water vapor transfer to the atmosphere.”

## 12

### Secular Stagnation (Environmental exploitation)

What economists call “secular stagnation” has been around since the 1930s. Being described as the idea that a combination of an aging population, low rates of immigration, and the exhaustion of technological progress would lead to an imbalance between excess household savings and inadequate business investment. The result would be an extended period of little to no economic growth. The theory got new traction in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis thanks to Harvard economist Lawrence Summers. As he saw it, the main reason the economy struggled to recover from the Great Recession was secular stagnation: an increased propensity to save and a decreased propensity to invest, leading to “shortfalls in demand and stunted growth.”

The era of secular stagnation has led to decreased exploitation of land, as although the exploitation of land might be increasing, the rate at which it would increase if this era of stagnation did not exist would be remarkably more profound.

13

Spin

The world and society, as all things are, are in a (perceived) state of constant flux and movement. Just like one cannot have an object lacking space and time, so too can one not perceive an object whilst not also perceiving the subjective phenomena of growth and decay. Yet, here lies the question, is it possible that one can sum up existence as moving towards or away, growth or decay, progress or regress? No! And this is due to the existence of the causal problem of open-system desires.

There are two different types of desire that a person can have:

1. Open System Desire

An open system desire is characterised by the endpoint of said system being comprised of positive experience/emotion. For example if someone wants to buy a boat, the reason for them buying that boat, is that they will be able to sail on the sea, and this will bring about, in them, positive emotion/experience.

2. Closed System Desire

A closed system desire is characterised by a non-emotive/experiential definite aim, for example if one was to say they wanted to build a stadium, this would be an example of a closed system desire.

All open system desires fall into the causal problem of open system desires, of which there are 3 parts.

### **The Causal Problem Of Open Systems**

#### *1. The Infinitude Of Cause*

The best way to represent this is through the idea of the butterfly effect.

The butterfly effect is a concept that originates from chaos theory and describes how small, seemingly insignificant events can have far-reaching and unpredictable consequences in complex systems. It suggests that a minor change in the initial conditions of a system can lead to significant differences in the outcome over time. The following are examples of said effect:

- a. In the annals of history, there are few events that have had such far-reaching consequences as the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his beloved wife Sophie Chotek. While the world is familiar with the immediate aftermath of their tragic deaths, the deeper implications of their untimely end have been the subject of much philosophical debate.

Sophie Chotek was a woman of grace and beauty, married to the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Despite the deep love shared by the couple, the rigidity of royal customs and traditions forbade Sophie from accompanying her husband to official ceremonies, leaving her feeling lonely and unfulfilled.

In a move that spoke volumes about his love and devotion to his wife, Archduke Franz Ferdinand decided to take an impromptu trip to Bosnia to inspect the Austro-Hungarian military capacity. However, the real reason behind this trip was to offer Sophie a much-needed break from her mundane routine and alleviate her boredom.

Sophie was overjoyed at the invitation to join her husband on this trip, and the butterfly effect was set in motion. The couple set out on their journey in an open-top car, with the archduke relishing the opportunity to flaunt his beautiful wife in public. However, fate had other plans.

As they reached the streets of Sarajevo, a Serbian nationalist emerged out of nowhere and shot both Archduke Ferdinand and Sophie at point-blank range, instantly ending their lives. The brutal killing caused a stir of rage and upheaval, with Austria demanding an apology from Serbia for their role in the tragedy.

The response from Serbia was tepid, and they refused to issue an apology, which in turn led to Austria declaring war on Serbia. The domino effect of this declaration was nothing short of catastrophic. Russia, Serbia's ally, came to their defense and declared war on Austria, which was Germany's ally. Germany responded by declaring war on Russia, and France and Britain, both allies of Russia, declared war on Germany.

The stage was set, and World War I was unleashed upon the world. The impact of this war was enormous, and its repercussions are felt even to this day. The war led to the collapse of empires, the re-drawing of borders, and the loss of millions of lives.

However, the story does not end here. The devastation of World War I led to the collapse of the German economy, and the subsequent rise of Adolf Hitler to power. Thus, the assassination of a bored and innocent woman set in motion a chain of events that shaped the course of history for years to come.

- b. President Wilson, who had rallied for fewer punitive damages on Germany before the Treaty of Versailles, played no active part in the negotiations after being struck down by the Spanish flu in 1918. The president's absence was a significant blow to the US delegation, as Wilson was the driving force behind the League of Nations, a key element of the treaty.

Without Wilson's persuasive influence, the Treaty of Versailles imposed harsh restrictions on Germany, leading to its total economic collapse. The German people became increasingly bitter about the ruling, and they began to look for a strong leader to take charge.

The leader they found was none other than the dictator who later started WWII – Adolf Hitler. Had Wilson been present at the negotiations and succeeded in awarding fewer punitive penalties to Germany, the world might be different. His absence caused a butterfly effect that had severe repercussions.

- c. The idea that Hitler was responsible for the creation of anime seems like a wild statement, yet it's not entirely untrue. The butterfly effect of World War II had a profound impact on Japan's economic and cultural development, which, in turn, influenced the birth of anime as we know it today.

In 1945, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki devastated Japan, leaving its economy in ruins and its people in a state of shock and despair. Daily life became a struggle, with food and resources scarce. However, despite these dire circumstances, Japanese artist Osamu Tezuka saw an opportunity to lift people's spirits through his art.

Tezuka created a comic book series called "New Treasure Island" in 1947, which became a national sensation. The comic's success showed that there was a demand for entertaining and inspiring stories that helped people cope with the hardships of daily life. This gave rise to a new genre of comics called "manga," which became immensely popular in Japan.

As Japan's economy began to recover in the 1950s, more artists began to create their own manga series. The success of these comics eventually led to the creation of animated adaptations, or anime, which became increasingly popular not just in Japan, but around the world.



So, while it may seem far-fetched to say that Hitler was directly responsible for the creation of anime, it's clear that the butterfly effect of World War II played a significant role in shaping Japan's cultural landscape and giving rise to one of its most beloved and influential art forms.

Here I do not simply mean to show how one action has such large effects, but also the infinite effects that can come from one cause. Since every effect is also a cause, and every cause gives rise to an effect, from any given cause there are infinite effects.

## 2. *The Ambiguity Of Assessment*

As time stretches infinitely onward, so too does the unending cycle of cause and effect. To elucidate this concept, I shall employ the parable of the man and the horse, originating from Eastern folklore. which goes as follows:

- a. In a distant time, there was a man who experienced the loss of his beloved horse. When his steed fled, a neighbor approached him, remarking upon the misfortune, stating, "How unfortunate it is that your horse is gone." The man, in response, pondered, "What knowledge do I possess concerning such matters?"

After a few days had passed, the horse returned accompanied by twenty untamed horses. Once again, the neighbor arrived, astounded, proclaiming, "Remarkable! It is not misfortune but rather fortune bestowed upon you. You now possess twenty additional horses." In his enigmatic manner, the man replied, "What understanding do I possess regarding such matters?"

The following day, the man's young son endeavored to tame one of the newly acquired horses, only to be met with a powerful kick that fractured his leg. The neighbor, approaching once more, expressed his sympathy, asserting, "How tragic it is that your son's leg is broken. The arrival of these horses has brought about ill fortune." The man, unperturbed, retorted, "What comprehension do I possess concerning good and ill fortune?"

Time passed, and a band of ruffians appeared, seeking recruits for their gang. They targeted able-bodied young men and, upon approaching the man's dwelling, discovered his son with a broken leg. Deciding against selecting him, they departed for the next house. In a moment of revelation, the man conveyed, "Fortunate, indeed, it is that your son's leg was broken." And yet again, he posed the question, "What understanding do I possess regarding such matters?"

From this, it must be said that when non-temporally bound, one cannot assess good luck and bad luck, or normatively assess effect.

For another example take the effect of Japan's long life expectancy that was mentioned prior.

### 3. *The Assignment Of Normativity*

- a. The first problem that we have is the assessment of "the good" and "the bad" quantitatively and qualitatively. Here we can assume that good and bad relate to positive and negative experiences, but the question is how to quantify and qualify such experiences. There is no metric that can be used in order to test one's level of positive or negative experience, and if there were to be a metric how should we assess the factors such as the time of the positive or negative experience, and the intensity of the positive or negative experience, not to mention the comparison of the different types of positive and negative experience. Due to these factors, one must conclude that quantitative or qualitative positive/negative experience assessment is impossible.
- b. The second problem that we have is the assessment of "the good" and "the bad" in comparison to another. If we can presume that we are able to get a quantitative and qualitative assessment of a person's positive and negative experience then how would we compare that to another? Can it be presumed that they are using the same scale or even the same units? This is not the case, and therefore we must conclude this comparison is impossible.

*The causal problem of open system desires can be seen as a chain reaction of nuclear fission, where one case gives birth to many effects, and since all effects are also causes, these effects give birth to many second-order effects and so and so on, and in order to assess the outcome one must assess all effects till the end of time. The impossibility of this task is obvious.*

It is, for this reason, man continues his spin.

# The Dilemmas Of Gain And Loss

Decent begets decent,  
And ascension begets its likeness.  
For when one rises  
Does he use wings?  
Does he soar?  
Cast into a pit of despair  
He climbs out on the corpses

When one is at their lowest, ideas of a point lower than their own often surface in order to give relief and solace, but then what is one in an even worse position to do? It is, maybe, that they too should think of one in an even worse plight than their own. And then what for the next? Ideas that once brought solace now fall upon empty shells, turtles all the way down it once was, yet now, only ghosts and visages remain. Is it not better to look up? The sight above is blinding. Above lies 1000 suns, and many have tried to peer at their excellence, however when one sees the stars in their unrequited glory, quickly they are consumed by blindness, and eternally their purpose remains dark, vanta-black, as such, it is best to keep one's eyes fixed below. What is it that's below? It is the inferiority that makes one superior, it is the down that necessitates the upwards, and the greater that gives meaning to the lesser. This is the way in which we all construct our lives, and it is that joy and sadness most commonly abound when taken with respect to ourselves relative to others. Even the act of gratitude is nothing more than pious schadenfreude.

## 1

### Combustible Envy

Though envy abounds to a greater degree in some, and to a lesser degree in others, it is a constituent endemic to humanity. When we are shown one that is greater than ourselves or one that has that which we desire, yet do not lay claim to, the way in which envy boils up, is only reflexive, and evidence for the heat of man's avarice.

Yet, even on the opposing side, when one's lot is not much to be envied, the existence of such inferiority brings one great cheer, yet for such joy to enter our hearts it must wear a facade and masquerade itself so that we are not reminded of the hot wax of the Marquis de Sade's sadism.

## 2

### Gratitude

Gratitude, at its core, is the feeling of joy in that which one has and is often manifest in taking time to think of the little, or even at times, big things that happen in one's life on a daily basis, that one may feel joy towards. Gratitude can also manifest itself interpersonally, in the act of giving joy to another for something that they have done for you. Yet the question stands, what is it exactly, that one is truly grateful for?

When one feels (non-interpersonal) gratitude, is such gratitude, not simply a joy derived from the existence of that which is below them? If it is the case that one should feel joy because they are in a better situation than another, does this joy not predicate the existence of that which is in a lower state? Think for example of the act of writing down what one is grateful for, maybe something along the lines of "I am happy for my house", (this could be exchanged for quite literally anything that one has). Is it not true, that this could be rephrased as "I am happy, that I am not someone that doesn't have a house?" You see in the recomposition of such a phrase lies the problem, the pain of the lesser is essential and not incidental to the creation of one's joy from gratitude.

Think even now about the levels of gratitude, and what level invokes the most joy. Is it not that the commonality, of the event, and the unimpressiveness of the position in a particular hierarchy, are inversely proportional to the joy derived from gratitude? For example, if one was to feel thankful for the existence of their hands, their tongue, or their ability to breathe, would such gratitude bring more joy, than if one was to think of privileges more unique to them, such as particular friends, family, or even one's prized possessions? Surely the latter would arouse greater joy.

If it is true here, that the latter arises greater joy, and it is also true that the impressiveness of one's position is dependent on the quantity of those who sit below such a position, then is it not the case that the magnitude of the joy derived

from gratitude is not simply an equivocation for the sheer mass of those who are inferior to oneself?

To this one might respond: “could it not be the case that those who I derive gratitude from could simply be noncorporeal, merely conceptualized, and never actualized?” to this point I would simply rebut with the idea of realism. Think of yourself having a bad day at work, and in an attempt to cheer yourself up you think about what you are grateful for, and this idea comes to mind: “well at least I’m not currently getting waterboarded, whilst having all of my limbs cut off”. Though I’m sure everyone can agree that this is a very negative experience, this experience is too far removed from our own reality (for most of us anyway) in order to invoke the feeling of gratitude, and far less a feeling of joy from said gratitude.

Think, however, of one that goes to a country in which there is no running water, no air cooling, or electricity. (presuming this person was in a country where they had all these things prior) Is it not at this point that one becomes truly grateful for that which they once had? When one is mired in uncommon endless pain, abounding strife, and palpable inferiority, at that point is it not that one is more grateful than ever? The point at which that which is lesser than oneself is not just known but felt.

Think of even interpersonal gratitude. When it comes to interpersonal gratitude, is the joy derived from such an event not simply, us indulging in our all too common narcissistic clandestine pleasures?

Do not think here that I am trying to malign the feeling of gratefulness, it is indeed true that one should feel grateful. Yet, it is also important that one truly knows the face of gratitude, its abounding blemishes, and sunken eyes.

### 3

#### Schadenfreude

– Much of the following will be from Smith et al –

Schadenfreude, or the pleasure derived by someone from another person's misfortune, is one of the most common, and prevalent emotions. To see someone that we envy, dislike, or even were previously apathetic towards, fall down the hierarchy, can bring us great joy, but why is it that such emotion even arises?

When we don't feel empathy or sympathy for a person, that sympathy or empathy is replaced by schadenfreude or its potentiality. This is because self-extrapolation is endemic to humans, it is a product of our tribal nature, that which we do not feel empathy or sympathy for is not in our tribe, therefore its descent could very well mean the indirect ascension of our tribe, particularly if the opposing tribe is in a higher position than our own.

There have been studies that show that the emotions of envy and Schadenfreude are often closely linked. "Although envy is painful and Schadenfreude is pleasurable, it can be hypothesized that envy creates the conditions under which Schadenfreude should occur if a misfortune befalls the envied person.

Envy is a complex emotion with a number of facets. It can be a uniquely unpleasant experience. As Silver and Sabini (1978) note, envy is the one "sin" that has no obvious pleasure joined with it. Envy is unpleasant in part because self-evaluations are so often derived from how well or poorly we compare with other people on self-relevant hierarchies. When we feel envy, it means that we lack something important to us, and this lack is made apparent by social comparison.

A rich tradition of scholarly work suggests that envy also involves a sense that the envied person's advantage is undeserved (e.g., Hazlitt, 1823/1932; Heider, 1958; Nietzsche, 1880/1911; Parrott, 1991; Russell, 1930; Smith, 1991; Smith, Parrott, Ozer, & Moniz, 1994). In Heider's (1958) view, the envying person desires the "equalization of lots," especially if the advantaged person is similar in most other important ways. The sense of injustice results from psychological balance forces that require that similar people "ought" to have similar fortunes. Even though societal norms dictate that we celebrate the good fortunes of others, privately we may resent the envied person's advantage because they exist in a higher position than one's selves, which is the very reason for the existence of one's lesser position, and specifically, why one's position is not higher.

The sense of injustice in envy may help explain why a third typical feature of envy involves hostility and dislike. It is natural to feel hostility if someone has an undeserved advantage (Brown, 1986), even if the claim of injustice must remain a private grievance because it lacks social validation.

Although envy is usually painful, scholarly traditions also point to another side to envy, one that can actually lead to pleasure rather than pain (e.g., Elster, 1989; La

Rochefoucauld, 1678/1959; Mora, 1987; Neu, 1980; Plato, 427–348 B.C./1925; Schoeck, 1969). Socrates, in Plato's *Philebus*, argued that envy is actually an emotion in which pain and pleasure are mixed with each other because it is the envious person whom we see "rejoicing in the misfortunes of his neighbors" (p. 333), the purest form of Schadenfreude.

Envy, unsurprisingly, appears to fulfill many of the conditions for Schadenfreude if the envied person suffers a misfortune. One situation in which another's misfortune should be pleasing is when the misfortune benefits us in some way (Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988). Invidious comparisons seem native to competitive arenas in which people struggle for scarce resources (e.g., Nozick, 1974; Sullivan, 1953). A misfortune befalling an envied competitor leads to the envying person's direct gain, and therefore the misfortune should please. Also, misfortune can cut away at the very basis of envy because it renders the advantaged person less enviable due to their decreased hierarchical position. And so accompanying the Schadenfreude is agreeable feelings of relief caused by the decrease in envy.

The sense of injustice in envy should provide a further basis for feeling pleased over a misfortune befalling the envied person. In general, just as it is natural to feel angry and hostile when someone commits an injustice (Brown, 1986), it may be correspondingly natural to feel pleased if this same person suffers a setback especially if this person is hoist with his or her own petard. Even if the misfortune is qualitatively different from the injustice originally committed, there may be a pleasurable sense that a wrong has been righted and that a form of justice, poetic justice, has been served. Although the sense of injustice in envy may lack social validation, a misfortune befalling the envied person may still please in a private way, because now, to use Heider's terms, this person's situation better matches what "ought" to be.

Pleasure at an envied person's misfortune should also occur because of the hostility and dislike that envy usually generates. If we dislike someone, his or her misfortune should be pleasing to a degree (Feather, 1989; Heider, 1958; Ortony et al., 1988). Although the antipathy created by envy will lack public favor, it should still provide the envying person with yet another reason to feel pleased, at least privately, when a misfortune befalls the envied person.

The methodology of the study goes as follows: Subjects saw one of two versions of a tape. The same actor played the role of the student, but in the superior condition,



details were fashioned to make him appear outstanding in terms of academic achievements, research and hospital experience, extracurricular activities, social life, and the likelihood of getting into a good medical school. In the average condition, he was shown engaging in the same basic activities, but his actual achievements were similar to an average student. In the superior version, his grade point average was 3.85; in the average version, it was 3.0. In the superior version, his job in a research laboratory involved contributing to “cutting edge” work on a complex growth hormone, whereas in the average version, his job involved washing glassware. In the superior version, he noted that he was on the university tennis team, and a shot was included of him playing tennis with his attractive girlfriend; in the average version, he simply noted that he liked playing tennis, and a shot was included of him taking tennis lessons. In the superior version, when asked about his chances of getting into medical school, he revealed that his adviser believed he would be able to get into Harvard; in the average version, he noted that “he would be very happy to get in anywhere.”

As expected, both dispositional envy and target person superiority were associated with greater episodic envy, indicating that the target person manipulation was successful in creating envy, or those who were shown the superior student felt heightened feelings of envy, regardless of their innate predisposition towards feelings of envy. A greater degree of Schadenfreude was experienced at the misfortune of the superior target person, than at the misfortune of the average target person.” (Envy and Schadenfreude – Smith et al 1996)

The results of this study, I'm sure, are largely unsurprising to most, as schadenfreude is a feeling which is so prevalent it often has to be repressed. If one is questioning why some people feel schadenfreude to a greater or lesser extent than others it is often due to how that person constructs their tribe and their division of ingroup and outgroup.

This is most evident in politics, if someone who you want to win the next election has something bad happen to them it is likely that you will not feel any joy or schadenfreude from that. The reason for this is simple, you are that person. For all intents and purposes when looking at how you are presented on the hierarchy, both your ascent and descent are inextricably linked. Yet, if someone that we did not want to win was to have something bad happen to them, this would most likely exhibit schadenfreude, especially depending on how much one has internalized said hierarchy.

## The love of losers

The fact of losers, as a necessary prerequisite for the existence of victors, in some cases, is not alone sufficient to bring the negative quality of being to light. Think of the words of Nietzsche, in *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, “With these preachers of equality will I not be mixed up and confounded. For thus speaks justice to me: “Men are not equal.” And neither shall they become so! What would be my love to the overman, if I spoke otherwise?”, or the common sentiment of new age intellectuals such as Jordan Peterson, speaking in favour of the losers loss as if one was not to lose, one wouldn’t be able to bask in the glory of the winner. There is a perniciousness in the cheek, and a sharp tip on the tongue of those who speak such words. Let it be known once more what has been said prior, it is losers that make the winners, if this is true, would it not be that a winner, would desire more loss assuming said loss does not constitute themselves?

Hope, in essence, is most often a malformed idea that the world is a fair and logical place, that if we do what is required of us then so too will the world give onto us what we require of it. Such a conception of the world presupposes existence to be a phenomenon that can be humane in the way that it cares about one's will, yet man stands face to face with the irrational.

Once the multitude of negative and immutable characteristics of being are inquired into, it is common for one to respond emphatically with the statement “the world isn’t fair”. Yet such a profoundly problematic statement is often said with little consequence on the part of the speaker as if the statement itself is apathetic, or a mere analytical assertion, lacking vitriol, and devoid, very much so, of the weight of blood. This statement, though it is true, is also somewhat of a useless statement, as it often misses the point in regards to the question that is being asked, responding descriptively instead of prescriptively.

Wherever there are those who disdain the state of the world, so too are there those who revel in it, those who hide themselves in the carnage, so that they find respite from realities harsh winters chill.

Consider a hypothetical scenario where you reside in a prosperous town that thrives on financial support from a prominent oil tycoon. A pivotal vote arises,

posing a binary choice: whether the town's inhabitants desire the oil tycoon to continue funding their endeavors or if oil extraction should cease. Initially, it may seem logical for you to support the continuation of oil extraction. However, this narrative only captures a fraction of the larger picture. There exists another town, the very place where the oil extraction occurs. Inhabitants of this town are forced to confront the perpetual pollution stemming from the mining process. If you were to find yourself in that town, it is highly probable that you would advocate for the cessation of mining operations.

Both sets of individuals find themselves entrenched within the same world, one that is characterized by its inherent unfairness. However, the circumstances disproportionately favor one side while placing the other at a severe disadvantage. Consequently, when discussions emerge regarding the world's inherent inequities, it is crucial to recognize that it is not uncommon for the intent behind these two contrasting perspectives to contradict each other fundamentally.

5  
Desire

Sentience and desired ascension are tautologies, all that lives desires to desire and strives to strive. This is why it is common for people who have just achieved a great feat, to often feel somewhat apathetic afterward. Think of a great achievement that you have accomplished in your life, at first, there is a sense of euphoria, or extreme joy, yet is it not often that this joy is replaced, after some point, by apathy?

Take for example Eddie Hall, one of the strongest people in the world, if not the strongest person in the world, after he completed his 500-kilo deadlift, for a time he was ecstatic about it, however that time was short-lived. Eddie Hall in his interview talks with Brian Rose about how he was lifting 500 kilos one day, and the next day he was at his son's birthday party, talking to the guests. Though the guests at the party were excited to hear about this event, at the end of the day he is still the same man he once was, to use Eddie Hall's own words, "You still have to take a shit like everyone else". There is also the pressing issue of what to do next when one sits atop the hierarchy.

It is not just that this issue is simply common, it is quite literally hardwired into our minds, through the neurotransmitter dopamine. Dopamine increases when one is getting closer to achieving their goal and decreases when the goal is met. The reason for this is because dopamine largely dictates movement, particularly movement towards a pleasurable stimulus, (this is what makes pleasure appetitive).

Dopamine is that which makes us feel good when we are working towards some kind of goal or ascending a particular hierarchy, however, when that goal is achieved we are no longer met with the same good feeling that we once got from dopamine. Speaking evolutionarily this trait was very necessary, as if we were to

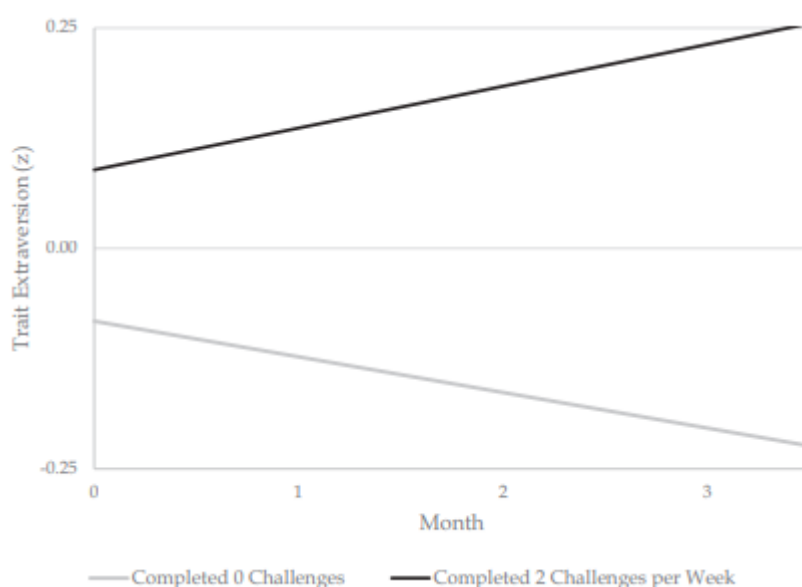
become complacent it would most likely lead to us dying. Constant advancement was the way that led to the highest rates of survival and such is the trait that currently resides in the vast majority of us, but what about those who cannot ascend?

When one attempts and fails, it is often thought that this is in some way a good thing, saying that the road to one's goals is built on failures. Yet, these people often only focus on those who actually succeed eventually at their task and rarely pay any mind to how those who fail, can often end up in a worse place than they originally started.

There was a study conducted by Nathan W. Hudson et.al, trying to see if people were able to change their big 5 personality traits, (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism) with the methodology of the study going as follows: The present study was a 15-week intensive longitudinal design that tested 400 participants in whether engaging in trait-typical behaviors predicted trait change. Participants provided self-report ratings of their personality traits and were able to freely accept and complete weekly —prewritten behavioral goals that would pull their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in line with their desired traits.

Results indicated that merely accepting behavioral challenges did not predict trait changes. Rather, only actually completing challenges successfully (i.e., performing trait-typical behaviors) predicted trait change over time. Thus, merely wanting to change does not appear to be sufficient to evoke trait growth; successfully changing one's personality traits may require actively and successfully implementing behaviors to change oneself.

The black line represents an individual who, over the course of the entire 15-week study, completed two extraversion challenges per week successfully. The grey line represents an individual who, over the course of the study, completed no extraversion



challenges successfully.

Mere participation in an intervention did not appear to predict change in participants' personality traits across time. Rather, it was only successfully completing challenges that predicted trait growth, so trying wasn't what made the difference, succeeding was. But not only was that the case, but when one tried and failed, it led to them being in an even worse position than they were previously. When one attempts to climb a hierarchy, and it turns out that said attempts were in vain, it is not uncommon for that person to regress even further in the hierarchy.

## 6

### Involution

- Much of the following will be taken from Manya Koeste Article in What's On-Weibo Titled - The Concept of 'Involution' (Nèijuǎn) on Chinese Social Media -

In many cultures, the hierarchies themselves are corrupt and maladaptive, often bringing about pain for all, such as in China with the idea of Nèijuǎn and Bai Lan. Nèijuǎn or Involution, as explained by Jialing Xie in his article in "what's on Weibo", can be described as the economic situation in which as the population grows, per capita wealth decreases". The term 'involution' and how it is used today comes from a work by American anthropologist Clifford Geertz titled *Agricultural Involution – The Processes of Ecological Change in Indonesia* (1963). In this work, Geertz explores the agricultural dynamics in Indonesia during the colonial period's Cultivation System, where a radical economic dualism existed within the country: a foreign, Dutch economy and a native, Indonesian economy. (p. 61-62)

Geertz describes how the Javanese faced a deepening demographic dilemma as they saw a rapidly growing population but a static economy, while the Dutch, who organized Javanese land and labor, was only growing in wealth (69-70). Agricultural involution is the "ultimately self-defeating process" that emerged in Indonesia when the ever-growing population was absorbed in high labor-intensive wet-rice cultivation without any changing patterns and without any progress (80-81). When Geertz used the term 'involution' to describe the dynamics in Indonesia, he built on the work of another American anthropologist, namely Alexander Goldenweiser, who also used the term to describe "those culture patterns which, after having reached what would seem to be a definitive form, nonetheless fail either to stabilize or transform themselves into a new pattern but rather continue to develop by becoming internally more complicated" (Geertz 1963, 81).

The popular use of the Chinese translation of ‘involution’, *nèijuǎn* 内卷, started to receive attention in Chinese media in 2020. It is deviating from the original use of the term and is meant to explain the social dynamics of China’s growing middle class.

As suggested in the article “‘Involution’: The Anxieties of Our Time Summed Up in One Word”, by Zhou Minxi (CGTN), the popularity of the term comes from “a prevalent sense of being stuck in an ever so draining rat race where everyone loses.” China’s ever-growing middle class is now facing the question of how they and their children can remain in the middle class in a situation where everyone is continuously working harder and doing all they can to rise above the rest. Xiang Biao, a professor of social anthropology at Oxford University, is quoted by Zhou: “The lower class still hopes to change their fate, but the middle and upper classes aren’t so much looking upward, and they are marked by a deep fear of falling downward. Their greater fear is perhaps losing what they already have.”

The term ‘involution’ often comes up together with criticism of China’s ‘996’ work system (working from 9 am–9 pm, 6 days a week). Although Alibaba founder Jack Ma once called the 12-hour working day a “blessing,” the system is a controversial topic, with many condemning how Chinese (tech) companies are exploiting their employees, who are caught in a conundrum; they might lose their sanity working such long hours, and might lose their job and future career prospects if they refuse to do so.

The notion of involution is conceptualized perfectly within “A Love for Dilemma” a 2021 TV drama directed by Zhang Xiaobo (张晓波), who also worked on other hit series including *Nothing But Thirty*. This season’s popular TV drama “A Love for Dilemma” is themed around family, parenting, and China’s competitive education system. In the series, two stepsisters compete against each other over the school results of their children. The family’s ‘grandpa’, played by famous actor Zhang Guoli (张国立), tries to create harmony around the dinner table between his daughter and stepdaughter, but the rivalry between the two and how they raise their children intensifies nevertheless.

While stepsister Tian Yulan urges her little son to work hard in school and focus on his grades so that he can go to the best high school and university, sister Nan Li places more emphasis on the general development of her children and wants them

to enjoy their childhood. Both mothers, however, question their own choices when facing challenges with how their children perform at school. The specific scene that has ignited current discussions is a dialogue between the husbands of the sisters, who sit outside to talk about the education system and how it sometimes feels like everyone is in a theatre watching a show together until one person stands up from their seat. This makes it necessary for other members of the audience to also stand up until everybody is standing. The dialogue continues, with the two talking about how it does not stop at the people standing up. Because then there are those who will take it a step further and will stand on their seats to rise above the others. And then there are even those who will grab a ladder to stand higher than the rest. But they are still watching the same show and their situation has actually not changed at all – except for the fact that everybody is now more uncomfortable than they were before.

This is a perfect example of what I had spoken about in previous chapters, a hierarchy in which no one wins. These hierarchies often perpetuate themselves solely because of how entrenched they are in the culture of the land. Often these hierarchies are not even questioned and are simply thought to be a fact of life, as such, people have different ways of coping with this existence, the first being to adopt the hierarchy, the second, being to in part internalize the hierarchy but dilute it somewhat with the addition of other hierarchies, and the third, to put it most simply, would be described as accepting defeat.

Bai Lan is a Chinese phrase, (摆烂, or let it rot in English), is a rejection of this hierarchy, in exchange for valuing hedonistic pursuits, in particular, an attempt to attain ataraxia, looking for small pleasures in life, in combination with a sense of giving up on hierarchical ascension.

Examples of memes sent about Bai Lan on sites such as Weibo, Douban, and Bai du, goes as follows: “Someone has to be a loser. Why not me?”, “to smash a cracked pot”, and “dead pigs are not afraid of boiling water”, one person summarised how they embodied the movement as follows: “my life is a mess. My attitude to work, why don’t I quit my job! Gaming? Losing is fine. Weight loss? I don’t care if I die from obesity. Old age? I quit living.” Another said that they embody it in this way: “Previously when people called me a loser, I replied: Damn, who are you talking about? Now when people call me a loser, I reply, You’re a good judge of character”.



If one was to sum up, the logic of Bai lan, it would be that “trying hard doesn’t always pay off, however not trying means always being comfortable”. Though it is thought that these people are “dropping out of hierarchies” it is more that they are partaking in vicarious ascension. Living vicariously through different people, or characters, in movies, shows, videogames, or other forms of entertainment, and then superimposing these people's hierarchical ascension onto themselves. (i am in wholehearted agreement with the actions of those who practice Bai Lan, life is something to be endured, a burden that is to be coped with, and if such a coping mechanism is effective, then I salute those who champion it).

## Vanya

In conclusion, the dichromacy of being can be seen as non-corporeal, necessary, and negative in nature. Wherever there is light there is also darkness, and whenever there are winners there will always be losers as well, it is cause and effect, and one cannot be separated from another. For this reason, mankind is forever locked in a journey to find a mythical object, that which has a top, yet no bottom, such action is futile. Usually.

### 1

#### Vanya

Vanya will allow one to always have the ability to ascend, regardless of external, or internal hindrances. Constant movement upwards, for all, with no limit, whenever one was to reach the highest echelon there would be one above that which is higher, and that one is able to attain. Such realities are possible.

Throughout the entirety of this book, I have spoken about the negative nature of reality, how dichromacy has within them a litany of negative consequences for the plight of man, and how the plight of man, is an a priory feature of the subject. However, the problems which have been presented here are fixable, and will be fixed in the coming future.

The main schism which I have tackled here is between man and man, how existence together leads to conflict and dichromacy. Many have attempted to amend this

problem by changing the nature of man, attempting effectively to rewire him to be more of a passive being, the idea of Nietzsche's slave and master morality comes to mind here.

#### Chapter 6- Part 4 - Master Morality

- Much of the following is taken from Lee Archie and John G Archie's, Reading for -  
- Philosophical Inquiry, -

There is a master morality and a slave morality - but I would like to add right away that in all superior and mixed cultures there are also attempts to reconcile the two moralities. Yet, we still, more often find confusion and incomprehension. It is true that at times even they are closely bound juxtaposition, a friendly foe - even in the same man, within a single soul. The distinction of moral values originates either within a ruling caste, comfortably aware of being different from the governed - or within the governed class, the slaves and dependents of all kinds.

In the first case, when the rulers define the term "good", it is the exalted and proud disposition, which serves as a distinctive feature and determines the order of precedence. The noble human type separates from itself the beings in whom the opposite of this sublime and proud attitude is shown, it disgusts their existence. It should be noted at once that in this first type of morality, the antithesis "good" and "bad" means practically the same thing as "noble" and "despicable", - the antithesis "good" and "bad" is of a completely different meaning, however. The cowards, the timid, the insignificant, and those who think only of petty utility are despised; furthermore, also, the distrustful with their reserved looks, the self-degraders, the dogs that allow themselves to be mistreated, the beggars, and above all the liars: - it is the fundamental conviction of all aristocrats that the people are false. "We truthful" - that's what the nobles of Ancient Greece called themselves.

It is evident that everywhere initially the designations of moral worth were applied to man, and were derived and applied only to acts of man at a later period; it is therefore a grave error when moral historians begin with questions such as, "Why are sympathetic deeds praised?" The noble type of man considers himself an admired not the admirer; he does not need approval; he judges: what is harmful to me is harmful in itself; he knows that only he himself gives credit to things; he is a creator of values. He honors all that he recognizes in himself: such morality is self-aggrandizement. In the foreground is the feeling of plenitude, of power that wants to overflow, the happiness of a high tension, the consciousness of a wealth

that would like to give and give plentifully: – the noble also helps the unfortunate, but not – or barely – out of pity, but out of a surge of an abundance of power.

The noble honors the powerful in himself, the one who has power over himself, who knows how to speak and be silent, who likes to submit to severity and harshness, and has respect for all that is severe and harsh. “Wotan put a hard heart in my chest,” says an old Norse legend: He rightly speaks from the soul of a proud Viking. Such a type of man even prides himself on not being made for sympathy. The hero of the saga, therefore, warns: “He who does not have a hard heart when he is young will never have one.” The noble and the brave who think so are furthest from morality, which lies precisely in compassion or in acting for the benefit of others, or sees the mark of morality in selflessness; self-belief, self-pride, a radical hostility and irony to “altruism” are as much a part of noble morality as a reckless disregard and caution of sympathy and “warm heart.”

It is the powerful who know how to honour, it is their art, their inventiveness. The deep reverence for antiquity and tradition – all right rests on this double reverence – the belief and the prejudice in favor of the ancestors and unfavorable to the newcomers characterizes the morality of the powerful. And if conversely, people who have “modern ideas” almost instinctively believe in “progress” and “the future” and increasingly lack respect for old age, then the ignoble origin of these “ideas” has complacently betrayed itself thereby.

A morality of the ruling class, however, is more especially foreign and irritating to present-day taste in the sternness of its principle that one has duties only to one’s equals; that one may act towards beings of a lower rank, towards all that is foreign, just as seems good to one, or “as the heart desires,” and in any case “beyond good and evil”: it is here that sympathy and similar sentiments can have a place. The ability and obligation to exercise prolonged gratitude and prolonged revenge—both only within the circle of equals,—artfulness in retaliation, refinement of the idea in friendship, a certain necessity to have enemies (as outlets for the emotions of envy, quarrelsomeness, arrogance—in fact, in order to be a good friend): all these are typical characteristics of the noble morality, which, as has been pointed out, is not the morality of “modern ideas,” and is therefore at present difficult to realize, and also to unearth and disclose.

The situation is different with the second type of morality, slave morality. Assuming that the abused, oppressed, suffering, unemancipated, weary, and insecure people should moralize, what will be the common element in their moral assessments? A pessimistic suspicion about the overall situation of the man will probably be expressed, perhaps a condemnation of the man and his situation. The slave has an eye unfavorable to the virtues of the powerful; he has a skepticism and a distrust, a refinement of distrust with regard to all the "good" which is honored there – he would like to persuade himself that their happiness is not true, nor authentic. On the other hand, the qualities which serve to make life easier for those who suffer are highlighted and flooded with light; here comes compassion, helping hand, warm heart, patience, diligence, humility, and kindness; for these are the most useful qualities and almost the only means of bearing the burden of existence. Slave morality is essentially the morality of utility.

Therein lies the origin of the famous antithesis of 'good' and 'evil': power and danger are believed to reside in evil, a certain fear, subtlety, and strength, which cannot be despised. Thus, according to slave morality, the "bad" person evokes fear; according to master morality, it is precisely the "good" man who arouses and seeks to arouse fear, while the bad man is considered the despicable.

The contrast reaches its climax when, according to the logical consequences of slave morality, a semblance of depreciation – it may be small and well-meaning – finally attaches itself to the "good" man of this morality; because, according to the servile mentality, the good man must, in any case, be the safe man. He is good-natured, easy to deceive, and perhaps a little stupid. Wherever slave morality prevails, language tends to approximate the meanings of the words "good" and "stupid."

Here, it could be said, that the less servile and more dominating morality of the master is that which is true and natural, as it mostly pertains to man's wish to have the power of full and unadulterated self-actualization. Yet, to spite those who have power, a new form of morality is aroused, which goes against impulse, and dominates the self, and subjugates the self instead of external stimuli, as it should, and must do.

Slave and master moralities are both necessary to the world as it stands so that one can have either a perceived or truly actualised sense of power. The problem here, presupposing the problem to have a solution, is not the self, and the self's inability

to dominate, and command authority, but others, and their inability to be commanded, and dominated.

It might be said that it is easier to change man to become more dominating and aggressive, fear-inducing, and so on, but this is not at all the case, the reason for this is extremely simple, and that has been pervasive throughout this book, that fact being that everyone cannot dominate. where there are dominators, so too must there be the dominated, one cannot exist without the other.

For this reason, my point is made clear, man is incompatible with its likeness. To fix such a schism is for man to exist within a world, in which all can dominate always. This world will work on a simple predicate, the hotter the battle the sweeter the victory, with the heat and the pain being adjusted for each person so that the perception is identical, even if the Fahrenheit might be different. To use a somewhat questionable coinage, to each according to his ability, to each according to his desire.

One will not simply be gifted victory, however, victory will always be attainable to one if they are willing to work for it, a world in which the means are always conducive to the desired ends, and the means are an endemic quality of man.

Reality is a harness.  
Harness the harness.  
For our ambition.